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Headlines:

BT LAUNCHES ASSURE THREAT DEFENCE SECURITY SERVICE
- Combines event monitoring technology and professional services to help customers better identify and react to advanced cyber security threats;
- Enables users to identify complex infections across the full range of devices;
- Service being piloted in Americas prior to worldwide launch later this year.

VERIZON ADDS AWS TO SECURE CLOUD INTERCONNECT SERVICE
- Amazon Web Services added to cloud services available on Secure Cloud Interconnect service, offering dynamic bandwidth allocation, application performance throughput, quality of service and usage-based billing.

ORANGE LOOKS TO IMPROVE INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE
- Business VPN Internet offers high-performance, secure access to Internet-based cloud and Web services from 15 global Internet gateways;
- Aims to improve performance and security, as well as to cut costs.

SINGTEL PARTNERS AKAMAI FOR CLOUD-BASED DDOS SERVICE
- Cloud-based security solutions to be offered to enterprises across Asia Pacific;
- Aims to protect against DDoS attacks and improve content delivery.

CENTURYLINK EXTENDS MANAGED HOSTING REACH TO CHINA
- Managed hosting, security, cloud and networking services available from a data centre in Shanghai through partnerships with Neusoft and Citic Telecom.

COLT LAUNCHES FX LIQUIDITY ACCESS SERVICE IN KEY MARKETS
- Service, which includes low-latency connectivity and proximity hosting, connects market participants in London, New York and Tokyo;
- Colt has recently created a dedicated Capital Markets team.

VODAFONE SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDS GLOBAL IP VPN POP BASE
- To add 21 additional PoPs in North America and 12 in South America and Latin America for an ultimate total of 212 MPLS PoPs worldwide;
- Although playing catch-up with the 'Big Four' global service providers, Vodafone can leverage its fixed and mobile networks across 17 countries;
- With slow churn rates in the MNC segment, Vodafone can only grow steadily.

EASYNET LAUNCHES NEW GENERATION OF FIREWALL SERVICES
- Easynet partners with Palo Alto Networks to expand security portfolio.

CISCO EXPANDS INTERCLOUD REACH WITH NEW PARTNERS
- 30 new partners expand Intercloud reach to 250 data centres in 50 countries.

GTT ACQUIRES US MANAGED SERVICES COMPANY UNSI
- Acquisition adds to base of US enterprise and carrier customers.

'BUSINESS TRUST IN CLOUD DATA SECURITY AT AN ALL-TIME LOW'
- Survey highlights continued uncertainty characteristic of an immature market.

BT LAUNCHES ASSURE THREAT DEFENCE SECURITY SERVICE

BT has announced the latest addition to its BT Assure portfolio - Assure Threat Defence.

"BT has combined cutting-edge event monitoring technology and professional services to create Assure Threat Defence which helps customers and security analysts better identify and react to advanced and sophisticated cyber security threats.

Specifically designed to counteract the growing threat posed by complex and targeted attacks by cyber criminals, the new service automatically monitors network traffic and downloads. It enables users to identify complex infections across the full range of customer devices - such as PCs, laptops, mobile devices, servers and files.

Often referred to as 'Advanced Persistent Threats,' these complex cyber attacks are capable of bypassing traditional security monitors which usually rely on signature-based detection tools. Assure Threat Defence does not rely on signature-based detection techniques and is able to detect and prevent complex and sophisticated attacks, as well as unknown and custom malware."

Mark Hughes, President of BT Security, explained: "Cyber criminals are increasingly creating custom malware that evades common signature-based malware detection methods. They will often use tactics like e-mail spoofing and malicious Web content to deploy their custom malware and establish an initial foothold in a target environment.

Traditional security controls can't always adequately protect against these advanced techniques. Assure Threat Defence has been designed to offer organisations world-class resistance to address the constantly evolving threat landscape. It creates a secure and robust solution for customers across all sectors and of all sizes."

"Once a threat is identified, BT security analysts investigate the issue, evaluate the risk and notify the customer with highly informed details on the threat's targets and associated cyber security information. Combining threat detection capabilities with swift response times means that customers using the new solution are assured of industry-leading continuous threat protection.

With this new service wrapped into our managed security service, customers can rest assured that they have the valuable awareness and protection against advanced threats, ensuring that they are doing everything in their power to stay one step ahead of attackers."

BT is piloting the new service in the Americas, with a worldwide launch planned for later in the year.

There has been a spate of high-profile reports about security breaches and threats over recent weeks and the issue should figure high on CIOs' agendas, so the more sophisticated any products and professional services that become available the better –

both for customers seeking protection and for service providers looking to cement strong customer relationships and margin-rich revenue streams.

VERIZON ADDS AWS TO SECURE CLOUD INTERCONNECT SERVICE

Verizon Enterprise Solutions has announced the addition of Amazon Web Services (AWS) to its growing list of cloud services accessible via its Secure Cloud Interconnect (SCI) service, "enabling clients easily to manage a multi-cloud environment that allows for dynamic bandwidth allocation, application performance throughput, quality of service and usage-based billing."

"With SCI, Verizon is removing many of the barriers that often affect enterprise cloud adoption, including scalability, control and flexibility."

"As more organizations look to hybrid computing, SCI offers enterprises a very viable option," said Thierry Sender, Director of technology, Verizon. "The service offers enterprises the right blend of security, private connectivity, performance, simplicity and efficiency while enabling a wide range of applications and use cases for organizations. With SCI, we help enterprises truly take advantage of the cloud."

"According to a recent study by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services and sponsored by Verizon, companies moving aggressively to adopt cloud computing are winning competitive advantage by reducing complexity and increasing business agility. The study found that the real benefit comes not from lowering costs but from being able to capitalize on new opportunities more quickly than competitors. In addition, companies found benefits to be many, including rolling out new business initiatives more quickly and better connecting employees and information.

SCI uses AWS Direct Connect to enable pre-integration of networking and data centre interfaces to create a secure, high-performance environment. With Verizon's SCI service and AWS Direct Connect, enterprises can register and select the AWS region location and service information automatically to provision high-speed, dedicated connections in minutes or hours, versus days or weeks using a more traditional model.

SCI with AWS Direct Connect is available immediately in Northern Virginia and Silicon Valley. London and three Asia Pacific locations (Sydney, Singapore and Tokyo) are planned for late October.

SCI is built on Verizon's world-class Private IP network that offers any-to-any connectivity of IP, while providing the security and reliability associated with private wide area networking solutions. Available in more than 170 markets around the globe, Private IP delivers scalability, varying Classes of Service, expansive reach and exceptional service including stringent Service Level Agreements for latency and packet loss."

A growing number of service providers are offering direct and secure access to cloud services offered by third parties in order to facilitate their customers' ability to optimize their hybrid cloud environments. These developments represent both a shift in the pattern of how enterprises are doing business, and in how ICT service providers need to facilitate access to cloud services. Over time, this is likely to challenge

existing notions about customer ownership and the nature of customer relations, with some customers pursuing a DIY path and others looking for more help as ICT becomes ever more complex.

ORANGE LOOKS TO IMPROVE INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE

Orange Business Services is extending its core Business VPN service with Business VPN Internet.

"It is designed to meet the growing demand from multinational corporations (MNCs) for high-performance, secure access to Internet-based cloud and Web services.

Business VPN Internet is a cornerstone of the Orange Business Services Hybrid Network strategy. It provides secure business-class Internet, which improves performance for the entire network by eliminating congestion risks on the IP VPN, reducing Internet access latency and prioritizing business-critical traffic.

To deliver Business VPN Internet, Orange Business Services has initially invested in 15 global Internet gateways on five continents. These distributed Internet gateways break traffic out closer to the user to eliminate the latency caused by the long physical distances between the user, the gateway and the destination Web site.

Because Business VPN Internet is delivered as an extension of Business VPN, customers have a single provider for both IP VPN and Internet services, which reduces their management overhead. Business VPN Internet also ensures that Internet connectivity complies with the enterprise security policy, while delivering Internet costs benefits through smart pricing.

- Worldwide access: gateways are currently available in London, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mumbai, Sydney, Tokyo, New York, Atlanta, San Francisco, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg and Bahrain;
- Each gateway provides virtual firewall protection based on the customer's security policy. Orange Business Services can also provide cloud-based security such as URL filtering to complement the service;
- Provides geolocalization as standard, so that users in each country are able to access local Internet services;
- New Internet Class of Service (CoS) enables accurate application prioritization and supports traffic bursting between the Internet and IP VPN as required;
- Competitively priced hybrid Internet/WAN ports can offer bandwidth cost savings of up to 30%. The solution is available with no additional capital expenditure for customers.

Business VPN Internet is part of the Orange Business Services Hybrid Network strategy, which is designed to help enterprises cope with the predicted tripling of global IP traffic between 2014 and 2018. To enable their digital transformation, enterprises need to accommodate the new ways of working allowed by both VPN and Internet. They need a network that can manage different kinds of traffic and prioritize them based on importance, location, device and user.

The Orange Business Services Hybrid Network combines the best features of the traditional IP VPN and the Internet. It is built upon three pillars: distributed Internet breakout, Internet offload, which moves selected traffic from the enterprise IP VPN onto the Internet according to business rules, and cloud interconnection between the network and the cloud service provider. This is delivered along with application optimization on a secure global platform."

"By seamlessly integrating secure Internet and cloud services into our core network, we are able to support new ways of working and deliver the best possible end-user experience," said Pierre-Louis Biaggi, Head of the Network Solutions Business Unit, Orange Business Services. "Ultimately, Hybrid Networks as we conceive them at Orange Business Services help drive the move toward digital transformation by supporting the new generation of Internet-based services."

The extension of Business VPN Internet will appeal to existing Orange VPN customers as it should simplify service provision, improve performance and make security more robust.

SINGTEL PARTNERS AKAMAI FOR CLOUD-BASED DDOS SERVICE

SingTel and Akamai have announced a partnership to offer cloud-based cyber security solutions to enterprises in Asia Pacific.

"This partnership will help companies strengthen their ability to cope with the volumetric and application types of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and other malicious Web attacks. The partnership will leverage Akamai's globally distributed Intelligent Platform to deliver Akamai's solutions for an enhanced customer experience.

DDoS attacks are committed by cyber criminals who stealthily command unrelated PCs and servers, often in different geographical locations, to saturate an enterprise's bandwidth in order to overwhelm it. This can overload the enterprise's servers, networks, info-communications platforms and applications, and severely disrupts normal operations and causes financial losses."

William Woo, Managing Director, Enterprise Data and Managed Services, said: "Enterprises today deploy mission-critical applications such as enterprise resource planning, e-commerce, cloud-based applications and Unified Communications across wide area networks and the Internet. While these applications help enterprises to be more productive, agile and cost-efficient, they also render enterprises more vulnerable to cyber attacks such as DDoS.

The partnership with Akamai enhances our capabilities further to deal with DDoS, one of the most prevalent and damaging cyber threats, and provide a better customer experience through faster content delivery.

The advanced cloud-based cyber security solution leverages the massive scale and capacity of a globally distributed platform swiftly to neutralise DDoS threats and keep networks and Web sites up during DDoS attacks. Using this solution, SingTel can

pre-emptively scrutinise, detect and block DDoS threats before they reach the targeted Web services.

This extends SingTel's security perimeter and protection coverage to ensure that our customers' servers, connectivity, Web infrastructure and apps are secured against critical downtime and theft of commercial data, without loss of performance," Woo added.

"According to analysts, a DDoS attack costs an enterprise an estimated US$2.1 million lost for every four hours of downtime and US$27 million for a 24-hour outage. In addition, an enterprise suffers damage to its reputation and brand as well as loss of their customers' trust."

Commenting on the partnership, Sanjay Singh, SVP, Asia Pacific & Japan at Akamai, said: "Akamai has a long history with SingTel, first as our customer and now as a partner, and we share their commitment to helping businesses succeed in today's hyper-connected world. We believe this partnership will enable SingTel to provide unparalleled security, availability and high performance to their business customers, helping them drive their business and brand forward."

"The cloud-based DDoS mitigation service adds another level in SingTel's multi-layered cyber security capabilities, which include incident response management and security analysis through SingTel's Security Operations Centres. This service is offered on a monthly subscription basis, which translates into lower operating costs as enterprises need not make hefty upfront investments in hardware and software, or maintain and update the complex systems.

Enterprises will also enjoy an enhanced customer experience through the Akamai Intelligent Platform which enables enterprises to host their media libraries, software downloads or entire Web site in a network of servers around the world. By replicating these contents in multiple locations, enterprises can deliver them closer to users more quickly, hence lowering latency. In addition, it provides an added resilience and business continuity measure as enterprises can still maintain a true high-availability platform for Web content and application delivery. This reduces enterprises' need to maintain their own failover infrastructure."

SingTel already has a strong reputation as a service provider across the Asia Pacific region, so this value-added addition will complement its existing position. Whether SingTel chooses to expand the reach of the service outside its backyard is a moot point – there is no indication of such plans, so, by inference, SingTel may well be happy to continue pursuing a strategy of direct coverage across the Asia Pacific supported by extended reach through third-party partnerships – if this is the case, it would make an attractive partner for anyone wanting to cover Asia Pacific without investing in infrastructure.

CENTURYLINK EXTENDS MANAGED HOSTING REACH TO CHINA

CenturyLink has announced the availability of its global managed hosting services in China, "expanding the availability of its Asia Pacific capabilities better to serve multinational corporations conducting business in the world's second-largest

economy. CenturyLink customers can now access a comprehensive portfolio of managed hosting, security, cloud and networking solutions through a Shanghai data centre."

"For multinational corporations looking to grow their customer base, entering China presents enormous opportunities and challenges," said Gery Messer, CenturyLink Managing Director, Asia Pacific. "CenturyLink makes it easy for businesses to host within China's borders, offering access to the same highly secure managed services and consistent IT experience available across our global footprint."

"CenturyLink's industry-recognized hybrid cloud and IT infrastructure and services are delivered across 57 data centres worldwide, including five in Asia. CenturyLink's new managed hosting, co-location and cloud presence in China is delivered through an agreement with Neusoft, a leading IT solutions and services provider in China, which has extensive market shares and customer bases in many infrastructure industries across the country. Businesses that need assistance entering the China market can also access extended services from CenturyLink through the Neusoft agreement."

"We are excited to collaborate with CenturyLink to meet the demand from its impressive enterprise customer base for China-based managed hosting solutions," said Angela Wang, SVP at Neusoft. "This collaboration offers clients a unique opportunity to expand their IT presence into China by leveraging the resources of two world-class global IT providers to help simplify the complexities inherent in China."

"The data centre is located in the Shanghai Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone and operated by GDS, a leading provider of high-availability data centre services in China. Citic Telecom CPC, an information and communication technology solutions provider and long-time CenturyLink provider in the Asia Pacific region, serves as the network provider."

"CenturyLink provides its enterprise client base with extremely high standards of reliability and security, two things that GDS is also well known for," said William Huang, CEO of GDS. "By matching a high-quality GDS data centre with CenturyLink's enterprise-grade managed hosting platform, we can now offer compelling solutions to the enterprise market."

CenturyLink continues to expand the reach of its data centre services – this time with the important addition of a capability in China. Even with the Chinese economy growing at a less precipitous rate than previously, the country remains the 'holy grail' for many enterprises with global ambitions, so managed solutions in Shanghai should appeal to many of CenturyLink's existing and target customers.

COLT LAUNCHES FX LIQUIDITY ACCESS SERVICE IN KEY MARKETS

Colt has announced the availability of its FX Liquidity Access service, connecting market participants to the London, New York and Tokyo FX markets.

"The service - which includes low-latency connectivity and proximity hosting - simplifies access to the global FX markets, enabling customers to access single- and multi-bank platforms 24x7."

"As customers increasingly look to exploit opportunities in new geographical markets and asset classes, the focus of a wider group of participants has turned to the global Foreign Exchange market," explained Naz Dossa, VP Capital Markets, Colt. "Market participants are always looking for faster speeds and increased efficiency in their trading activities to execute better than their competitors. Low-latency and global solutions are becoming key for banks looking to provide competitive spreads to their clients."

"Colt has provided access to the London market, the largest FX trading hub in the world, since 2011. The expansion of Colt's services to include both New York and Tokyo allows customers to host their pricing engines closer to the single- and multi-bank platforms providing the ability to take advantage of FX opportunities quickly and easily. The service ranges from simple connectivity in one market to a fully managed FX liquidity access solution that connects all three FX liquidity centres. The service leverages Equinix's International Business Exchange (IBX) data centres in London (LD4), New York (NY4) and Tokyo (TY3), and includes Colt's managed IT services. Backed up with a comprehensive SLA, this new Colt service simplifies service delivery for IT staff supporting eFX trading desks around the globe."

Dossa continued: "Today's announcement demonstrates Colt's ability to keep our clients ahead of the competition by putting them where they need to be strategically to take advantage of the increasing electronification of the FX market. The addition of this global FX capability also delivers economies of scale as clients do not have to engage multiple vendors for their global activities, leaving them to concentrate resource on trading strategies."

"As Equinix's foreign exchange trading ecosystem continues to grow, we're seeing more firms taking advantage of global opportunities and deploying across multiple regions" stated Stewart Orrell, Managing Director of global financial services at Equinix. "By launching its new service inside our data centres, Colt is providing a valuable new service to more than 800 buy- and sell-side organizations, trading venues and services providers."

"This announcement follows the recent creation of a focused Capital Markets team within Colt. Colt Capital Markets builds on Colt's extensive network and data centre infrastructure and expertise, and MarketPrizm's ultra-low-latency market data and infrastructure solutions. It provides the agile infrastructures that customers need to keep up with the pace of change in this marketplace."

Colt, which has always had a strength in the finance vertical, is going back to its roots to an extent with this new service and the formation of a dedicated Capital Markets team – building also on the assets acquired with MarketPrizm.

Colt's dilemma when addressing the finance sector may be its limited direct global reach. With finance a truly global sector, Colt still really only offers connectivity to,

rather than presence in, markets such as New York and Tokyo, let alone other financial centres outside of Europe for a broader range of finance sector customers.

VODAFONE SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDS GLOBAL IP VPN POP BASE

Vodafone has announced a more than threefold increase in the number of Points of Presence (PoPs) available to enterprise customers across the USA, Canada and South America, "enabling global businesses to gain the benefit of global Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN) services from a single supplier. The global MPLS-enabled network will ultimately connect 212 PoPs across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas. This expansion will complement Vodafone-operated fixed and mobile networks in 17 countries, creating the most expansive global MPLS network by both reach and depth in the industry.

Vodafone will establish an additional 21 PoPs in North America and 12 in South America and Latin America, each of which will be in locations close to Vodafone's major enterprise customer sites, high-density populations and data centre locations. Over the coming months, Vodafone will connect more than 67 countries directly, rising to more than 150 countries via partner networks. Vodafone's fully managed network is designed to meet the demands of complex multinational businesses, using a range of technologies from IP VPN and global Ethernet to secure Internet access to connect locations and employees. Vodafone's application-aware next-generation networks carry a full range of IP-based data, video and voice services to support organisations' transition to unified communications and cloud computing."

Vodafone Global Enterprise President of the Americas region, Chuck Pol, said: "We're putting the very best next-generation infrastructure where our customers need it and investing for the future by giving businesses access to the world's most expansive network by depth and reach. For the first time, multinational customers in the Americas region can benefit from global end-to-end services supplied by a single supplier."

This expansion of Vodafone's global network is a clear admission that the acquired Cable & Wireless Worldwide network lacked international reach, despite the latter's claims to have been a truly global player (some of which were 'recognized' by well-known analyst firms.) The investment does underline, however, the fact that Vodafone is serious about its ambitions in the MNC market. Vodafone's emphasis also on its 17-country in-depth fixed and mobile presence illustrates how it is looking to leverage its international position as both a fixed and mobile player as a quasi-USP. In truth, there is still a long way to go for Vodafone when it comes to traditional global networking, but the market is characterized by low churn on an annual basis, so Vodafone can afford to take its time and assemble all the right pieces.

EASYNET LAUNCHES NEW GENERATION OF FIREWALL SERVICES

To help organisations mitigate the risks of internal and external threats to businesses and their systems which are increasing in frequency, intensity and impact, Easynet is launching "a new, comprehensive range of next-generation managed firewall services."

"The services, which Easynet is delivering in conjunction with Palo Alto Networks, secure and protect businesses and their data, working at the application level to provide more granular security. As part of this portfolio, Easynet is also launching its own fully resilient cloud-based managed firewall service called vSIG, which draws on Easynet's expertise in delivering high-performance managed cloud solutions.

Ideal for global organisations embracing mobile working, or for businesses migrating data to a cloud-based environment, the group of Easynet firewall services ensures a company's security irrespective of user device or location, and is agile enough to adapt to the changing needs of the growing business.

Traditionally, network-centric firewalls are not application- or threat-aware and need complex deployment of multiple hardware, software, rules, policies and management systems. Conversely, Easynet provides a single, fully managed integrated security platform with consolidated reporting.

The new range of products - which includes virtual firewall services, remote access VPN, data filtering, URL filtering, identification of malware and application- and user-level reporting, as well as a resilient cloud platform - addresses a diversity of key security risks which may impact the performance of an organisation, including the risk of data loss and the disruption to business continuity caused by malware or system outages. Additionally, by providing full visibility into application usage and performance, the services address the risks caused by inefficient application management such as high bandwidth consumption and lost user productivity."

Adrian Thirkill, Easynet's UK MD, Global Services, said: "Five years ago, business leaders were kept awake at night by the impact of the troubled economy on their operations. Now, there's a fearsome new spectre lurking in the shadows: in the UK alone, businesses face around 1,190 internal security threats every day. Add to this the external threats such as viruses, application-specific hacks and phishing, and it's clear that organisations need to take protective measures or put their business at risk.

Together with Palo Alto Networks, Easynet removes the complexity which often goes hand in hand with security services by providing a single, high-performance security platform with detailed real-time reporting and 24x7 monitoring. Our customers select the services which best secure their organisations and we smoothly integrate the platform into their systems, whether they're in a cloud-based, on-premises or hybrid environment."

Mike Langley, Regional VP, Western Europe and South Africa from Palo Alto Networks, said: "Organisations throughout the world turn to Palo Alto Networks for levels of protection, visibility and automation traditional products can't provide. Together with Easynet, we can safely enable applications, maintain business productivity and offer enterprise-class detection and prevention through one, purpose-built platform."

Easynet is another example of a service provider with global ambitions, but without the extensive resources of the established 'Big Four' (AT&T, BT, Orange and Verizon). This means that it has a limited market and has to use innovative ways to improve its proposition (such as this partnership). Within this context, however,

Easynet continues to win business and retains a good reputation within its target niche.

CISCO EXPANDS INTERCLOUD REACH WITH NEW PARTNERS

Cisco has announced that more than 30 additional companies, including Deutsche Telekom (DT), BT, NTT Data and Equinix, have added their support to the Intercloud - the worldwide network of interconnected clouds – "that Cisco and its partners are rapidly developing to enable a new generation of standardized cloud applications and the proliferation of highly secure hybrid clouds."

"The news will expand the reach of the Intercloud by 250 additional data centres in 50 countries and advances Cisco's plan to address customer requirements for a globally distributed, highly secure cloud platform capable of meeting the robust demands of the Internet of Everything. Designed for high-value application workloads, with real-time analytics and 'near-infinite' scalability, Cisco's open approach to the Intercloud allows local hosting and local provider options that enable data sovereignty."

"Since we announced our OpenStack-based cloud strategy six months ago, we've received tremendous industry-wide support. The strategy is gaining momentum in the open source community and providing partners with a powerful cloud platform with global reach, and Internet scale and efficiencies," said Rob Lloyd, Cisco's President of development and sales. "Just as Cisco played a leading role in connecting isolated islands of LANs to architect the modern Internet, Cisco's Intercloud Fabric and Application Centric Infrastructure innovations uniquely position us to connect disparate cloud services to unlock the full potential of cloud, and with it a new era in IT."

Ashish Gupta, President, Portfolio, Service Design and BT Advise, BT Global Services, added: "Truly to realise possibilities in the cloud, our customers need improved performance and availability of mission-critical applications. At the same time, they are governed by local compliance rules and their data needs to remain highly secure. This requires hybrid cloud environments, combining public and private assets, and the ability to accommodate a wide variety of vendors and service providers. Our use of Cisco's Intercloud Fabric, combined with our well-established Cloud Compute infrastructure, enables such environments on a global scale. It allows us better to help CIOs orchestrate their cloud resources with a focus on seamless workload control and portability. BT is clearly at the core of that innovative drive."

Cisco positions its Intercloud network as a facilitator of cloud interconnection that will help in the roll-out of services and solutions in a consistent and standardized manner – indeed, the company has clearly signed up an impressive list of partners to help extend the Intercloud reach. This may well deliver end-customer advantages, but there is one sure-fire winner if the strategy pays off – Cisco.

GTT ACQUIRES US MANAGED SERVICES COMPANY UNSI

GTT has announced it has closed the acquisition of UNSi, a communications company providing data services to large enterprise and carrier clients in the USA.

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"Currently operating at an approximate $55 million annualized revenue run rate, UNSi delivers high-capacity Ethernet and MPLS wide area network solutions, Internet services and a broad range of managed services to more than 2,000 clients headquartered in the United States."

"The UNSi acquisition complements GTT's strategy to extend ubiquitous network connectivity, to expand our portfolio of cloud networking solutions and to deliver outstanding client experience. We are adding a great team of employees throughout sales, service delivery, network engineering, operations and back-office support to ensure we deliver for our growing client base with simplicity, speed and agility," said Rick Calder, President and CEO of GTT. "This transaction is another step towards our next financial objective of $400 million in revenue and $100 million in adjusted EBITDA."

"We are excited about the opportunity and potential of the combined company on behalf of UNSi clients, and we look forward to a smooth transition and integration," said Francis John, President and CEO of UNSi.

GTT acquired UNSi for $40 million comprised of a combination of cash and stock. "We financed the acquisition with cash-on-hand and a $15 million delayed draw term loan under our existing credit agreement," said Michael Bauer, CFO of GTT. "In August, we completed a debt financing, strengthening our balance sheet and providing the company with the flexibility to pursue accretive acquisitions, such as UNSi, which accelerate our growth strategy."

GTT is building its customer and revenue base as it looks to hit its $400 million revenue target and it looks like the portfolio and network overlaps between itself and its acquisition should result in plenty of synergy savings. Further consolidation amongst smaller and mid-sized players like UNSi is inevitable – and GTT is making itself into an ever more attractive target in the meantime.

'BUSINESS TRUST IN CLOUD DATA SECURITY AT AN ALL-TIME LOW'

"Data security and trust in cloud-based services are a rapidly growing concern for IT decision-makers within large organisations," according to a new global study from BT.

"While 70 per cent of those surveyed are adopting cloud storage and Web applications within their business, their confidence around cloud security is at an all-time low. Yet, despite this, 50 per cent say they have adopted mass-market 'consumer' cloud services, rather than those designed specifically for the enterprise.

The new study explores the attitudes to, and use of, cloud-based services of IT decision-makers from enterprise organisations in 11 countries and regions around the world. It reveals that three quarters of IT decision-makers (76%) say security is their main concern about using cloud-based services. Half of respondents (49%) admit that they are 'very or extremely anxious' about the security implications of these services. This is a substantial increase of 10 per cent from previous research in 2012.

On opting for consumer solutions over cloud offerings tailored to the enterprise, 48 per cent of respondents have the impression that enterprise cloud applications and services are too expensive, and 44 per cent hold the belief that mass-market public cloud applications and services are as effective as using those designed specifically for enterprise users.

For more than half (54%) of IT decision-makers, trusting a third party is also a concern. 41 per cent of respondents have the impression that all cloud services are inherently insecure and 26 per cent of those surveyed said that they had experienced a data breach incident where their cloud service provider was partly at fault."

Mark Hughes, President of BT Security, said: "The adoption of cloud services has increased rapidly across the globe. Organisations are looking to reap the numerous benefits - such as scalability, fast deployment and ubiquitous network access - these services can offer. It is an interesting paradox that the survey has exposed: on the one hand, decision-makers are concerned about the security implications of using public cloud services, but on the other, their buying decisions seem to be driven by short-term cost perceptions. We invite these decision-makers also to weigh up the reputational cost and impact on their brand of a cloud security breach. Enterprise cloud applications and services are designed to help businesses realise the possibilities in the cloud while substantially decreasing risk. For example, our own BT Cloud Compute portfolio can provide security around cloud storage, while our BT Assure portfolio brings powerful cloud-based security and risk management to the network. This can end up providing very substantial savings.

I would suggest organisations undertake a thorough risk analysis before opting for mass-market cloud services. Every organisation has a different appetite for risk and these need to be factored into the buying decision equation. Our security specialists can help them make the right assessment for the optimal solution to limit their risks, and deliver a great performance, whatever their needs may be."

First, this research-based PR should be better placed in context – the 640 interviewees were in medium to large organizations (1,000+ employees). It is also a little contradictory (or just a bit mad) if respondents choose to use 'consumer' cloud services and then admit their anxiety about doing so.

However, it is useful to highlight the difficulty of some of the price differentials between mass-market offerings and those developed for enterprises unless the added value of the latter, including security, is taken into account. Overall, the conclusion to be drawn must be one of on-going learning from both the customer and service provider perspectives. Over time, experience will help to strike the right balance between flexibility and security – and what are perceived to be high prices will come down as the market matures and competition intensifies.