Kuwait 🗠 Times 🌆



Prabu Balasubramanyan, Executive Director TransSys Solutions with the Oracle CX Award

TRANSSYS WINS 'ORACLE CX CLOUD Partner of the Year' award

ransSys Solutions, a leading regional IT services and solution provider, announced that it has won the 'Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year' award for 2016 at the recently held Oracle Partner Day Event in Dubai. TransSys was recognized for its commitment to delivering a variety of innovative client cloud transformations solutions using Oracle's CX Cloud in the GCC region. "Cloud and digital transformation are at the center of any business' corporate strategy to jump start from where they are today.

TransSys has been helping customers embark on their digital transformation journey using Oracle's cloud solutions. We are delighted to win the 'Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year - 2016' award, which is an achievement and an honor. This award is a testament to our team's dedication towards excellence and in providing solutions that drive real business value and results for our cus-

 IransSys Solutions, a leading regional IT services and solution provider, announced that it
 tomers," said Prabu Balasubramanyan, Executive

As an Oracle Platinum Cloud Select partner for the Middle East and Africa region, TransSys has been offering customers innovative solutions around its Oracle Cloud solutions portfolio.

The company offers cloud solutions on Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) across various functional areas viz. ERP, HCM, SCM, Cx. The company has also built PaaS for SaaS extensions across industry verticals to help clients quickly adopt to Oracle's Cloud platform, in addition to offering specific solution accelerators.

TransSys has significant experience in deploying CRM/CX solutions across the Middle East and Africa. The 'Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year' award is the fourth major award the company won for 2016.

MAKING A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR HOSTING SERVICES PROVIDER

Where either an entire or a part of IT function is outsourced to a third-party services provider, the need for unambiguous, easy to apply and easy to follow service agreements are becoming more important. The level of effort that goes into preparation of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between a services provider and the end-customer, is usually proportionate to the duration of the engagement. Typically, a longer term contractual engagement will have more detailed and rigorous descriptions.

A Service Level Agreement is defined as an official undertaking between a Hosting Services Provider and an end-customer. This agreement describes various aspects of the



Sachin Bhardwaj, eHosting DataFort, Director of Marketing and Business Development

service including quality, availability, and

end-customer having a prepared SLA allows the services of one provider to be objectively compared with another.

A well written and legally comprehensive SLA may include as many as two dozen different heads. This covers Definitions and Interpretation, Term of Agreement, Service Provider's Obligations, Client's Obligations, Fees and Payment, Provision of the Hosting Services, Service Levels, Scheduled Downtime, Service and Performance Monitoring, Confidentiality, Intellectual Property Rights, Termination, Post-Termination, Liability and Indemnity, Nature of the Agreement, Severance, Relationship of the Parties, Notices, Law and Jurisdiction, etc.

Notwithstanding the above, a few of the more important clauses used in a Hosting Services Provider agreement appear below:

Services - This is a detailed description of the services that will be provided and the end-customer groups that will receive specific services.

Availability - This is a description of the uptime limits of a service. The service may also be described in terms of performance, business expectations and outcomes. The higher the availability requirement, the more expensive the service.

Downtime- This is a description of the situation when the service is not available, exclusions for responsibility and force majeure, and the process of rebate linked to established failure.

Response time- This is a description of the time to respond and rectify based on the nature of the failure or complaint.

Escalation - For an externally hosted service, especially when there are time zone differences, this description is the most important for rectification of a fault. Going through a help desk or call centre repeatedly may not ensure timely rectification of the fault.

Schedules for notification- This describes

NEW WAVE OF ROBOTS SET TO DELIVER THE GOODS

'AUTONOMOUS ROBOTS TO TRAVEL ON SIDEWALKS'

WASHINGTON: The robots of the future will be coming soon, rolling along at a lumbering pace with those goods you just ordered. The six-wheeled, knee-high robots from startup Starship Technologies are part of a new wave of automated systems taking aim at the "last mile" delivery of goods to consumers. Starship is launching a pilot project of robotic deliveries of parcels, groceries and prepared foods in early Feb in the US capital Washington, with a similar test taking place in Redwood City, California.

The startup, created by two of the founders of Skype, Ahti Heinla and Janus Friis, has already begun testing in several European cities as part of an effort to bring new efficiencies to local delivery. The goal is to enable delivery within a radius of two miles within 15-30 minutes of an order, for \$1 or less, with the autonomous robots traveling on sidewalks and alerting consumers of their arrival via smartphone app. Starship spokesman Henry Harris-Burland said the founders were looking to "disrupt" an industry which had seen little efficiency improvement from new technology.

"We're trying to solve real social and economic problems," Harris-Burland said during a demonstration of the delivery bots in Washington. "This will take cars and vans off the road. We can also provide deliveries to the elderly and handicapped who have difficulty getting around." The company, which has its business office in London, engineering in Estonia and some 90 employees, announced in January it had raised \$17.2 million, led by Daimler AG with other investors as it moves to expand its testing and partnerships.



responsibilities. The SLA converts the Hosting Provider's services into a known function. This is particularly important where continuity and consistency of services from the Hosting Provider is important for the end-customer. In fact, SLAs are now widely used in a range of IT related services. These include IT administration services, managed application services, Cloud Computing, amongst others.

Another spin off is the use of SLAs by IT teams within an organization to manage the expectations of in-house stakeholders and customers. This helps the IT team of the organization to have its services justified, measured and benchmarked with other external IT service providers. Hosting Service Providers need such agreements in order to manage customer expectations. They also need to define the situations under which they are liable and not liable for deviations from the expected performance. For the the lead time required to be provided when there are any planned shutdowns or disruptions in the service. Planned maintenance cycles are usually known well in advance and can be built into business outcomes.

Benchmarks - This is a description of the parameters used to gauge the upkeep of the SLA and the point of responsibility for producing, monitoring and escalating these benchmarks.

Help desk - This is a description of how the help desk will respond based on the nature of the complaint or fault and the endcustomer flagging the complaint.

In conclusion, just because a Service Level Agreement exists, it does not mean that the service provider and the end-customer will meet each other's expectations. Leveraging the terms in the Service Level Agreement must be the means of last resort. There is much that can also be accomplished without resorting to it. While the Starship robots roll at a modest pace of around four miles per hour, Harris-Burland said they offer a more efficient and economical delivery model than drones, which are being tested by online retail giant Amazon and others. The rolling robots are far less expensive to build and operate than drones and face fewer regulatory issues. He said drones might be better-suited to remote and rural areas, while the Starship bots are designed for cities and suburbs, where they can roll along on sidewalks.

"We don't see these as competing with drones, we see it as complementary," Harris-Burland said. The Starship robots, which look like high-tech plastic picnic coolers, can carry about 20 pounds of goods, suited to three to four grocery bags. They do not offer heating or chilled compartments because rapid deliveries would not need them, according to Harris-Burland. They will not have the capacity to leave items on doorsteps, he said, because "customers will get delivery within 30 minutes, when they

are home" and collect the goods at the door. real-time

Mapping sidewalks

Starship has agreements for testing with the delivery firm Postmates in Washington and DoorDash in California, as it works toward a commercial model with other partners and retailers. When the pilot begins in February, consumers will be able to order pizza, toothpaste, milk or eggs through the services which may use humans or robots. Starship is not the only robotic delivery startup looking to disrupt the sector. California-based startup Dispatch has raised \$2 million in venture funding to begin testing of its rolling robots. Another California firm, Savioke, has agreed to provide delivery bots to hotels and apartment complexes.

Starship says one of its strong points is its "visual localization" technology that allows for

real-time mapping using nine cameras on each robot to help navigate along sidewalks and circumvent obstacles, people and pets. "We can see every crosswalk, every traffic light, every pothole," Harris-Burland said. "A lot of companies have mapped roads but no one has mapped sidewalks." The navigation is done by artificial intelligence, and the bots are "99 percent autonomous," according to the spokesman.

"We want a human being able to oversee the robot's journey and to intervene whenever there is a problem," he said. Harris-Burland said the company's tests so far in Europe have shown the system works, with no problems related to theft or vandalism. The lids of the devices are locked until the customer opens it with a smartphone. If anyone tries to steal it, an alarm will sound, and if it is hijacked the company can track it "to the nearest inch," he said. —AFP

TECH COMPANIES PROTEST TRUMP IMMIGRATION ORDER

NEW YORK: Google, Apple and other tech giants expressed dismay over an executive order on immigration from President Donald Trump that bars nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US. The US tech industry relies on foreign engineers and other technical experts for a sizeable percentage of its workforce. The order bars entry to the US for anyone from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days.

The move, ostensibly intended to prevent extremists from carrying out attacks in the US, could now also heighten tensions between the new Trump administration and one of the nation's most economically and culturally important industries. That's especially true if Trump goes on to revamp the industry's temporary worker permits known as H-1B visas, as some fear.

Biting back

"I share your concerns" about Trump's immigration order, Apple CEO Tim Cook wrote in a memo to employees obtained by The Associated Press. "It is not a policy we support." "We have reached out to the White House to explain the negative effect on our coworkers and our company," he added. Cook didn't say how many Apple employees are directly affected by the order, but said the company's HR, legal and security teams are in contact to support them. "Apple would not exist without immigration, let alone thrive and innovate the way we do," Cook wrote - an apparent reference not only to the company's foreign-born employees, but to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, the son of a Syrian immigrant.

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings was forcefully blunt. "Trump's actions are hurting Netflix employees around the world, and are so un-American it pains us all," he wrote on Facebook . "Worse, these actions will make America less safe (through hatred and loss of allies) rather than more safe.""It is time to link arms together to protect American values of freedom and opportunity," he continued. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg criticized the order in similar, though more carefully couched, terms on Friday.

Technology investor Chris Sacca, an early backer of Uber and Instagram, said on Twitter that he would match ACLU donations up to \$75,000 after the organization sued over the ban - and then decided to donate another \$75,000, for a total of \$150,000. EBay founder Pierre Omidyar, the child of Iranians, complained that the order was "simple bigotry." Tesla Motors and SpaceX founder Elon Musk, who has recently appeared to be cultivating a relationship with Trump, tweeted that "many people negatively affected by this policy are strong supporters of the US" who don't "deserve to be rejected." Musk is an immigrant from South Africa.

Google grumbles

Google told its employees from those countries to cancel any travel plans outside the US and to consult with the company's human resources department if they're not currently in the US, according to a company-wide note described to The Associated Press. That memo was first reported by Bloomberg and the Wall Street Journal. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, the Apple logo is shown on a screen at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference in the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, in San Francisco. —AP

AN IPHONE MADE IN America? Not that simple

SAN FRANCISCO: As US President Donald Trump pushes hard for goods to be "made in America," how realistic is it to expect Apple to stop manufacturing its iconic devices in China? The freshly installed president vowed while campaigning that he would force Apple to bring production to US soil. Yet, as other big companies have sought to appease the new administration with promises of jobs or investments in the United States, Apple has stayed low-profile. Major Apple contractor Foxconn this month confirmed that it is considering a \$7 billion investment to make flat panels in the US in a joint project with Japan's SoftBank

"I have discussed with my major clients about going to (the US) and they are also willing to invest, including Apple," Foxconn founder Terry Gou told reporters in Taipei. Taiwan-based Foxconn has given no details, and Apple declined to comment.Global Equities Research analyst Trip Chowdhry believed that moving manufacturing to the US, where many customers are, was more of a commonsense move than a political one. "You need to manufacture local products in local markets," Chowdhry reasoned. Making things locally gives better control of distribution networks and lets manufacturers customize goods for local markets, the analyst noted.

Logistics puzzle

Whether politically motivated or not, Apple is not in the same position as automakers which relocated US factories overseas to cut costs, according to IHS manufacturing processes chief analyst Dan Panzica. Apple never moved jobs offshore, it created them there. "The Apple jobs were never here," Panzica said. "The entire supply chain grew in China." Apple benefits in Asia from a network that goes beyond subcontractors assembling smartphones, tablets or laptops. The Californiabased firm relies on a dense ecosystem of companies that make components and spare parts for its devices as well.

China also offers sources of important raw materials, along with cheap, flexible and abundant labor to keep iPhone assembly lines cranking along. It would be "very hard to replicate" that situation with US workers without using "more robotics and less workforce," undermining the political aim of creating jobs here, according to Endpoint Technologies analyst Roger Kay. Exacerbating the challenge, "it makes no sense to make phones here if you have to ship all the components from China," said technology analyst Jack Gold of J Gold Associates.

Sacrifice profit or price

The MIT Technology Review in June considered several scenarios, from simply bringing assembly to the US to simultaneously shifting the manufacture of parts here. The Review estimated the extra manufacturing cost of an iPhone 6S Plus at \$30 to \$100 as a result of those moves. It is difficult to imagine that Apple would risk its status as the world's most profitable company to absorb such a hike in manufacturing costs. —AP