



Keynote speaker James Philips, Corporate Vice President



James Philips, Corporate Vice President (left), Samer Abu Ltaif, Regional General Manager of Microsoft Gulf (second left)

# MICROSOFT CLOUD ROADSHOW 2016 LEADS TOWARDS CLOUD INNOVATION

## CORPORATE VP HIGHLIGHTS ESSENCE OF CLOUD COMPUTING

By Islam Al-Sharaa

**DUBAI:** In line with Microsoft's efforts to impart the latest cloud knowledge and empower IT professionals to achieve more, the Cloud Roadshow 2016 was held on Feb 22 and 23 at the Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights. The event aimed at reiterating the cloud presence in the market by hosting two-day trainings held by Microsoft experts who shared valuable techniques and sound practices that allow organizations and individuals to leverage the most suitable technology solutions for their needs. It also provided a unique opportunity for IT leaders and professionals to meet and collaborate in an engaging platform.

The first day opened with keynote speaker James Philips, Corporate Vice President, Business Intelligence Group, highlighting the essence of cloud computing and imparting basic tips on how leveraging modern cloud technology can lead to organizations reinventing themselves. During the sessions, further stress was placed upon building and deploying of applications with the Microsoft App Platform, with emphasis on the fundamentals of Office 365, Windows 10 infrastructure and bringing power of data to organizations.

Kuwait Times spoke to Philips about Microsoft's cloud offerings and other services. Some excerpts:

**Kuwait Times: How secure is our information on the cloud. Who should have access to it, and more importantly, who can have access to it?**

**James Philips:** We have invested heavily in security and privacy. It's a core success. Ensuring our customers are able to trust our cloud is an important part of our success and our interests are completely in line. If you look at the investment that we have made and all the certificates that Microsoft has, clearly it's important to us. Plus we are at a global scale the best in global security.

**KT: In this age of Internet of Things, sharing economy and driverless cars, what is Microsoft's share and vision in these emerging concepts?**

**Philips:** The IoT is the most interesting thing that is happening in our industry. It is sort of a major next wave of innovation. We've seen personal computers give way to mobile computers, giving way

now to intelligent devices. Everything has software in it and that is what IoT is about - supporting the ability to execute the software in whatever device one wants to interact with backed by a cloud capability that can provide the ability to collect data, process that data and then provide a better experience to these clients. This is where most of the growth is going to come for us and for any other cloud provider in the next couple of decades.

**KT: Tell us something more about Microsoft Azure and new projects.**

**Philips:** We recently introduced Azure, which marries our business intelligence capabilities and data visualization with learning in advance analytics with the ability to create applications. It's a move away from simply providing a bunch of disaggregated infrastructure parts to providing complete business applications and complete infrastructure or service offerings that get customers closer to the solution they're trying to build with other clouds. With Azure cloud, you start closer to something that looks like a complete solution.

We are moving into a world where software is everything, that provides compelling opportunities to make our lives easier and our businesses more efficient. The cloud really comes into its own in that world, when you have trillions of devices around the world that are all admitting data and all capable of delivering back experiences based on the processing of that data which is fundamentally transformative and impossible without a global cloud infrastructure behind it. That's when the cloud starts to change the world we're living in and change the lives of the people that live in this world.

**KT: How secure is our information on the cloud. Who should have access to it, and more importantly, who can have access to it?**

**Philips:** The ability to permit the end users of devices to control their own policy with regards which information they are comfortable storing or sharing is an important part of Microsoft's strategies. If you compare what we do to what some of our competitors do, it is pretty clear that we land very strongly on the side of giving users control over their data and their information. We are in a business that provides great technology to allow our customers to build solutions.

One of the things that Microsoft does which is unique in this industry is to provide you an option. We give you a choice between using your own data centers or our cloud. How you decide what is right for you is going to vary depending on the industry that you're in and the problem that you're trying to solve. In general, the cloud gives you a higher degree of cost efficiency in order to start using infrastructure. If you have a global application and you need to have a footprint across the earth, the cloud will certainly be a better solution for you.

The evidence is that the worst breaches that occur are not in the public cloud, but for the people that are trying to do it for themselves. The other reality is that if you're trying to compete in today's world and you're trying to transfer your business, the cloud provides you with the opportunity to do that. It's impossible to alter any one company to lay down a global footprint of data center capacity to go facilitate building kinds of applications that are driving these changes. The cloud is a safer bet than trying to do it yourself and the cloud provides you a unique opportunity to go do things that you could never do yourself.

**KT: What about cost-effectiveness?**

**Philips:** If you look at the evolution of our pricing structure, it's pretty clear that we refuse to be beat on price. The most important thing to think about is the value someone is getting - the price is one component of the value. Microsoft has what really sets us apart from other competitors is full stack offering. You might find infrastructures that provide raw source and raw networking, like from Amazon, but what you don't find starting at the top is a complete business application integrated with a comprehensive data stack and analytic capabilities integrated with rich center developer tools and services riding the top infrastructure and servers with a global footprint which enables our customers to build solutions that are differentiated.

Price is obviously one component but ultimately what matters is can you go and serve your customers and deliver unique solutions that allows you to drive revenue into growth revenue that remains relevant in a world in which the economy is fundamentally changing across industries, and I think this is where the differentiation lies.



James Philips, Corporate Vice President, Business Intelligence Group (right) with Islam Al-Sharaa, IT Director Kuwait Times.



Second day presentations elaborated on cloud solutions that can lead to more collaborative and cohesive workspaces. Microsoft solutions like Office 365, SharePoint, Azure and Internet of Things (IoT) were expounded

upon, with prominent speakers emphasizing their role in creating more competitive advantage for businesses, and how best to leverage these solutions for managing workplace processes.

## FROM WESTERN UNION TO APPLE: WHEN TECH BATTLED GOVERNMENT

**NEW YORK:** The fight between Apple and the FBI over access to a San Bernardino killer's iPhone isn't the first time industry and government have tangled over privacy and security. Every revolution in communications technology has sparked new battles over its use that changed the course of law enforcement, surveillance and civil liberties. Here are a few famous cases that helped establish the rules that govern the government's access to our conversations and other personal details:

### THE TELEGRAPH

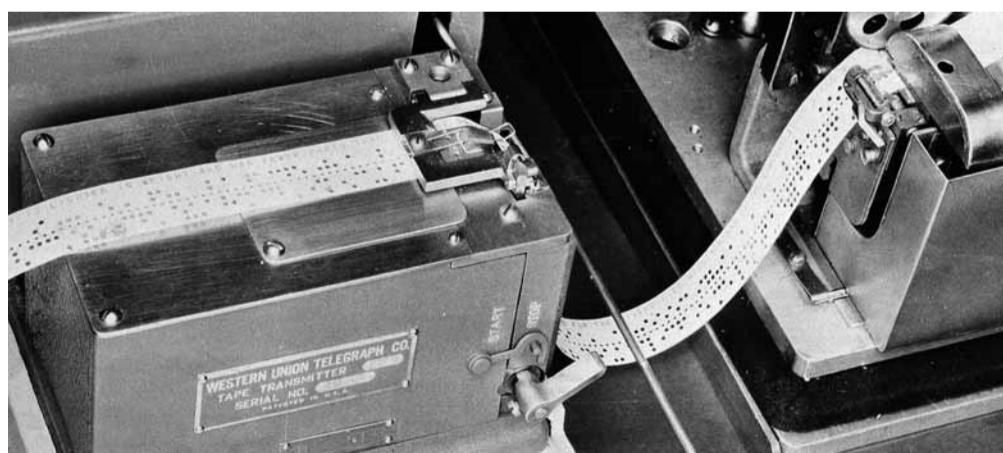
The telegraph upended nineteenth-century notions of time and distance, making possible same-day - and sometimes faster - communication where previously it had taken days or weeks for a mailed letter to arrive by train or steamer. Its users, though, had little expectation of privacy. All messages passed through the hands of telegraph operators, and the telegrams themselves were easily accessible to government agents.

Many states had privacy laws forbidding the telegraph company to let others read a telegram meant for you, according to a Mississippi Law Journal article by Wesley MacNeil Oliver, a Duquesne University law professor. But it was far less clear what evidence the government needed to present a court to justify a wiretap.

Western Union, eager to let customers know it was looking out for their privacy, jumped at the opportunity to object to government subpoenas in the mid-to-late 1800s. The company would argue that the government's requests for information were too broad and that they were unreasonable searches not permitted by the Constitution. The company's efforts helped set a standard for telegraph subpoenas, Oliver wrote. For instance, the government had to provide a "reasonably accurate description of the paper wanted, either by its date, title, substance, or the subject it relates to" instead of just requesting an "indiscriminate search" for information contained in a broad swath of telegrams, he said.

### THE TELEPHONE

Law enforcement efforts soared with Prohibition,



This May 16, 1944 file photo shows a device used by Western Union which translates a telegram into holes on a tape, and then passes it along to the box-like apparatus at left. — AP

leading to a confrontation with phone technology. A particularly famous case revolved around Roy Olmstead, a former Seattle police officer who became known as "King of the Northwest Bootleggers" for running a ring of liquor importers and distributors in the 1920s. Federal agents tapped the phone company's wires outside Olmstead's company offices and by his home in an era when there was no warrant requirement for doing so, said Richard Hamm, a history professor at the State University of New York at Albany. Evidence gathered from the taps was crucial to Olmstead's conviction.

The case went to the Supreme Court, where four of the then-major phone companies filed briefs in support of the convicted bootlegger, arguing that the warrantless wiretaps violated constitutional prohibitions on unreasonable searches and self-incrimination. The Supreme Court upheld Olmstead's conviction in 1928, ruling the wiretap evidence allowable since Olmstead's physical house wasn't searched nor his papers seized. But the decision galvanized legislative efforts to ban wiretapping by federal agents, Hamm said. The 1934 Communications Act, which regulated telecommunications and set up the FCC, also criminalized wiretap-

ping and barred the use of wiretap evidence in court.

Almost 30 years later, another Supreme Court case involving the FBI bugging of a public telephone booth largely overturned the Olmstead decision. The high court used the case to lay out the broad principle that the Fourth Amendment protects individual privacy, said Washington University Law professor Neil Richards, and not just the "physical sanctity of the home."

### THE TELEPHONE RINGS TWICE

A 1977 Supreme Court case, United States v New York Telephone Co, features prominently in the Justice Department's case against Apple, largely because it revived and reinterpreted a law as old as the Constitution for the modern age. In that case, a regional AT&T subsidiary gave FBI agents information but refused to lease them phone lines to install a "pen register" - a device that records the numbers dialed on a phone - to investigate a gambling ring. The company argued that it couldn't do so with a warrant under then-current wiretap law. A federal judge, backed by an appeals court, forced the company to provide technical assistance to the government. — AP

## WONDER MATERIAL SPARKS RUSH TO DEVELOP NEW ELECTRONICS

**BARCELONA:** Bendable mobile phones, quick-charge batteries and unbreakable touch screens - technology firms are racing to harness the potential of graphene, a wonder material which scientists say could transform consumer electronics. A fine sheet of pure carbon, graphene is as thin as an atom, making it the skinniest material known. At the same time though, it is 100 times stronger than steel, hugely pliable and can conduct electricity and heat better than anything else. "There are other materials which do have one of those properties each," physicist Kostya Novoselov - who first isolated graphene in 2004 - said at the Mobile World Congress, the sector's biggest trade fair, in Barcelona. "What is amazing here is that all those qualities are combined in one simple crystal." Of course that immediately leaves us with a number of possible applications.

### Graphene Patents Soar

Novoselov, a Russian-born British citizen, and his colleague at Manchester University Andre Geim won the Nobel Prize for their work with graphene, sparking a flurry of interest in the new material. The number of patents involving graphene soared from under 50 in 2004 to around 9,000 in 2014, according to Andrew Garland of research firm Future Markets, who puts out a twice-yearly report on the material. "Most are in electronics," he said.

Samsung, the world's number one smartphone maker, has taken out the most graphene patents - over 490 - followed by China's Ocean's King Lighting and IBM. While its real-world uses so far remain modest, research into possible applications for the material picked up steam in Europe after the European Union set aside one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in 2013 to be spent over ten years to investigate. "We believe we require another ten years to get to the point where a

lot of devices will start being on the market," said Andrea Ferrari, director of the Cambridge Graphene Centre at the University of Cambridge. The trade fair in Barcelona for the first time had a pavilion dedicated to graphene research centres and start-ups, a sign of the growing importance of the material to the mobile industry.

### 'Can Support an Elephant'

Graphene is so pliable scientists predict it will one day make flexible phones possible. British firm FlexEnable showcased a smart-watch prototype made using graphene that wraps around a user's wrist and features a full colour LCD display that is capable of running video content. "This sort of display technology is basically ushering in a completely new generation of mobile devices because we can start folding electronics," said the company's technical director, Mike Banach. British tech firm Zap&Go, meanwhile, displayed a graphene charger for mobile phones and tablets that takes just five minutes to fully load with power.

The company is making 2,000 versions to give to journalists and to people who pre-order them, said the company's marketing director, Simon Harris. "What we have here ultimately could replace the lithium-ion battery in billions of devices. It needs to come down in size and up in power," he added. Graphene is so strong and thin that researchers believe they will one day be able to use it to make unbreakable screens for mobile devices.

"With just a few kilos you can replace all the touchscreens in the world. With just a few layers on top of each other you can support an elephant," said Vittorio Pellegrini, director of the Italian Institute of Technology's Graphene Labs. "Graphene is really a material that allows our imagination to fly. There is no limit to what you can do," he added. — AFP