

CENTRIFY APPOINTS NEW EMEA CHANNEL DIRECTOR

DUBAI: Centrifly, the leader in securing hybrid enterprises through the power of identity services, has appointed John Andrews as its new EMEA Channel Director. John, who reports to Vice President and Managing Director for EMEA, Andy Heather, will be responsible for setting out and delivering on the company's long-term channel strategy and building a core set of distribution partners and VARs across the region, including the UK, DACH, Middle East, Northern Europe and Southern Europe.

John, who joined from BeyondTrust, has spent the last 18 years helping to build a channel presence and coverage in the Middle East and APAC markets for market-leading security vendors, including Juniper Networks, F5 and McAfee. He also spent three years as Marketing Director for Computer links Distribution, managing a portfolio of more than 25 security-focused vendors.

As Centrifly continues to invest funds and resources into channel marketing, one of the first jobs of the new Channel Director will be to evaluate 250+ partners and focus on establishing a top 10 tier of VARs in each region. Centrifly also plans to introduce an enhanced and improved virtual training platform for partners. This will include a one-week boot-camp style delivery into each region, with intensive training to bring partners up to speed on the company's services capabilities and encourage better cross-selling and customer support.

"We have built up a strong channel network across EMEA over the past few years, but now is the time to assess these relationships to ensure our partners have the right skill set, product alignment and are committed to adding real value to our mutual customers," comments John Andrews. "We also want to ensure we are working with channel partners that can offer specialist skills and routes into core vertical markets, including banking, retail and telcos.



John Andrews

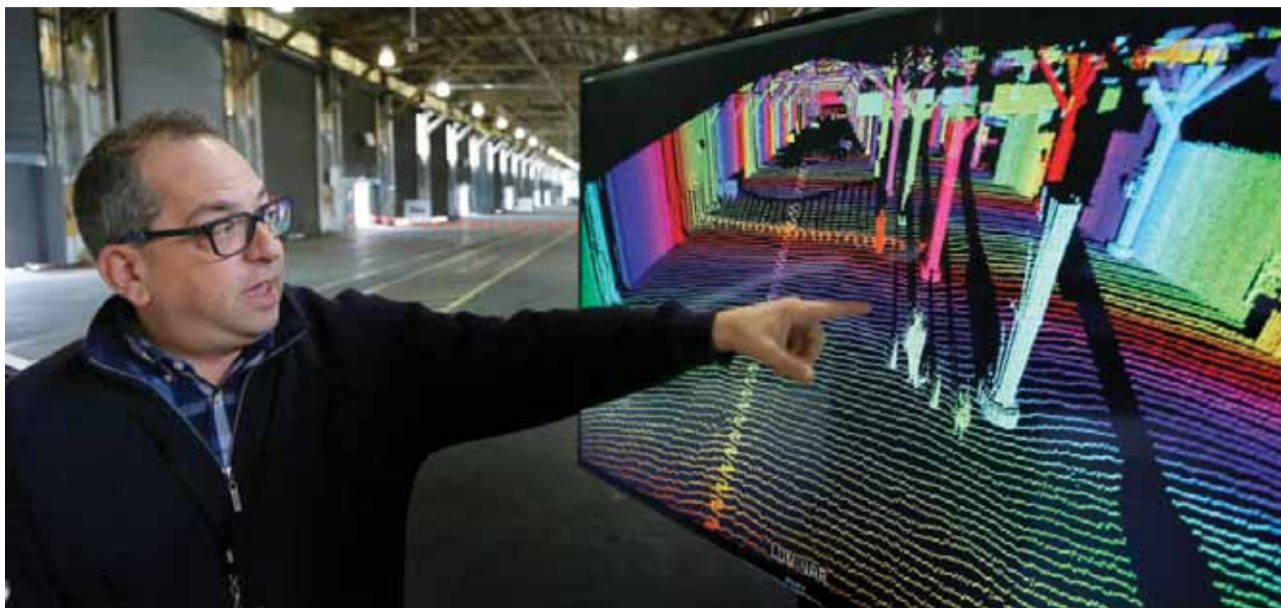
"Our strength is the identity message, which plays into every part of the security sell, from privileged access management and single sign on to multi-factor authentication and identity as a service (IaaS). My primary goal is to support our channel partners in

delivering this message to customers who are struggling to manage identity and access in today's diverse environments, incorporating hybrid cloud, mobile and data centre."

Centrifly, who appointed Exertis as its distribution partner in the UK two years ago following the decision to move to a two-tier model, will visit distributors in each country to involve them in the process and present the new corporate strategy and vision. Other distributors include Infinigate in DACH and France, StarLink in the Middle East, and DCB in Benelux.

Phil Brown, Sales and Commercial Director, Exertis, adds: "We're delighted that Centrifly chose Exertis as its sole distribution partner in the UK and Ireland. The market for identity management/consolidation is growing rapidly as businesses start to appreciate and focus on cyber threats. Mobility continues to play a major part in improving productivity, with users accessing cloud and onsite resources from multiple devices. Centrifly's offering in the market is unique as it combines identity assurance, access control, centralized administration and adherence to the latest regulatory guidelines, so IT departments can improve efficiency and protect their most valuable resources.

"We believe Centrifly provides our enterprise and SMB partners with a comprehensive platform to help organizations reduce the attack surface and fight against the threat of compromised credentials associated with cybercrime. Given our strategic relationship with partners, Exertis is committed to adding value to this new initiative by helping to extend their reach and stimulating growth in new markets."



SAN FRANCISCO: In this photograph, Luminar chief technology officer Jason Eichenholz points to a 3-D lidar map displayed on a screen in San Francisco. — AP

ASPIRING TECH PRODIGY TRIES TO RE-ROUTE SELF-DRIVING CARS

SAN FRANCISCO: Austin Russell, now 22, was barely old enough to drive when he set out to create a safer navigation system for robot-controlled cars. His ambitions are about to be tested. Five years ago, Russell co-founded Luminar Technologies, a Silicon Valley startup trying to steer the rapidly expanding self-driving car industry in a new direction. Luminar kept its work closely guarded until Thursday, when the startup revealed the first details about a product Russell is touting as a far more powerful form of "lidar," a key sensing technology used in autonomous vehicles designed by Google, Uber and major automakers.

Lidar systems work by bouncing lasers off nearby objects and measuring the reflections to build up a detailed 3-D picture of the surrounding environment. The technology is similar to radar, which uses radio waves instead of lasers. Russell

says Luminar's version, consisting of its own patented hardware and software, will provide 50 times more resolution and 10 times the range of current lidar systems. Those improvements, he said, will enable self-driving cars to be sold on the mass market more quickly.

Thiel backbone

During an interview in an empty warehouse on a San Francisco pier where Luminar has been testing its lidar, Russell wasn't shy about making big claims for its technology. "When you see your vehicle is powered by Luminar, you will know you will be safer," he said. "We need to get to the point where humans don't have to constantly baby-sit and take control" of autonomous cars.

If Luminar's lidar lives up to its promise, some of the world's biggest technology and auto companies may have been

upstaged by a precocious entrepreneur who says he memorized all the periodic table of the elements when he was 2 years old. By the time he turned 11, Russell says he was tinkering with supercomputers.

Like another technology prodigy - Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg - Russell won the early support of PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel, who became a billionaire after investing \$500,000 in Facebook during the company's infancy.

One of Luminar's early investors is a venture capital firm backed by Thiel and eBay founder Pierre Omidyar. Russell also dropped out of Stanford University after just three months when he won a Thiel fellowship, which pays students \$100,000 to work on promising ideas instead of pursuing a degree.

Cost or safety?

Also like Zuckerberg, Russell is CEO of his company. Most of Luminar's roughly 150 employees are older than him, including his former mentor in photonics, 45-year-old Jason Eichenholz, now the company's chief technology officer. Russell's father, a former commercial real estate specialist, is the company's chief financial officer. Now Russell will have to prove he has indeed invented something revolutionary. While lidar is a key component in self-driving cars, some believe Luminar may be working on the wrong problem. The big issue for lidar systems these days is cost, not safety, said Alex Lidow, CEO of Efficient Power Conversion, which supplies chips for lidar. The systems currently cost thousands of dollars apiece.

"You don't need the resolution that would allow a car to stop before a bug hits its windshield," Lidow said. "The question comes down to, what is the exact right amount of information for the car to make exactly the right decision all the time?"

Luminar plans to be manufacturing 10,000 lidar units at a 50,000-square-foot plant in Orlando, Florida, this year. Russell won't disclose what they'll cost. About 100 of the lidar systems will be tested by four makers of autonomous cars that Luminar isn't identifying. The partners include technology companies and automakers, Russell said. — AP

TODDLERS PLAYING WITH TOUCH SCREENS SLEEP LESS: STUDY

PARIS: The more toddlers play with touchscreen devices the less they sleep, according to a study released Thursday that suggests the findings could be cause for concern. For every additional hour using a touchscreen phone or tablet during the day, children aged six months to three years slept nearly 16 minutes less in each 24 hour period, researchers reported in the journal *Scientific Reports*. But the study could not determine if the extra screen time was responsible for tiny tots sleeping less, or if the loss of shut-eye had any adverse health effects.

One expert not involved in the research said the results "should be interpreted with extreme caution." Sleep is critical for cognitive development, especially during the first few years of life, when the brain and sleep patterns evolve in tandem. Earlier research has shown that television watching and video game use are linked to sleep problems in children. But the burgeoning use of touch-

screens by an even younger cohort remained unexplored. In 2014, more than 70 percent of families in Britain, where the study was conducted, owned a touchscreen device.

For the study, parents of 715 infants and toddlers were asked to report their child's daytime and nighttime sleep, how quickly their children fell into slumber, and how often they woke during the night. The time children spent on touchscreen devices was also tracked. Three-quarters of toddlers monitored used a touchscreen tablet or phone on a daily basis. For children aged two or three, that percentage climbed to 92. On average, the devices were used 25 minutes per day.

Not only did more screen time correlate with less sleep, it was also associated with a longer transition into slumber. The quality of sleep, however, did not appear to change. Several experts commenting on the findings challenged the study's methodology and conclusions. — AFP