

Cybersecurity as a Catalyst for Digital Transformation

Our Founder, Akim Benamara, engaged in a thought-provoking conversation with Genie Sugene Gan, Head of Government Affairs & Public Policy, Asia-Pacific, Japan, Middle-East, Turkey, and Africa at Kaspersky. They delved into a comprehensive exploration of the historical, current, and future landscape of cybersecurity in the African continent.



INTERVIEW BY:

Akim Benamara

Founder of TechAfrica News



Could you please provide us with insights into your participation in the inaugural edition of Gitex Africa? We'd love to learn more about your reasons for exhibiting at this event, your motivation for being here, and the highlights of what you'll be showcasing.

First and foremost, Africa is an immensely important market because of its outstanding potential. The cybersecurity ecosystem in this region has significant room for growth. Therefore, when we learned about the upcoming Gitex Africa event in Morocco, we were quick to realize the opportunity and eagerly decided to jump on the bandwagon.

The prospect is exhilarating because, at this show, we have the privilege of meeting with numerous delegations from the region and around the world. It has been a remarkable chance to

connect with stakeholders not only from the African region but also from various other parts of the globe.

The attention Gitex Africa is receiving from all corners of the world is remarkable, and it adds to the excitement. The experience so far has been nothing short of amazing, and we are truly thrilled to be a part of this exceptional event.

What specific solutions do you have to offer based on your experience in the African markets? Additionally, could you elaborate on your focus on cybersecurity and provide insights into your market approach?

I always believe in the principle of "different strokes for different folks," as it aptly applies to the diverse countries within the African market. Africa, with its numerous

nations, is a conglomerate of distinct entities. Just to give you an idea, the African Union alone boasts an impressive membership of 55 states. Consequently, each country has its unique set of priorities and varying degrees of cybersecurity maturity.

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GENIE SUGENE GAN

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & PUBLIC POLICY, ASIA-PACIFIC, JAPAN, MIDDLE-EAST, TURKEY, AND AFRICA

In light of this reality, Kaspersky has taken the initiative to cater to these individual markets by offering tailored solutions, technologies, and support. Our approach spans a wide spectrum, ranging from fundamental endpoint solutions



to comprehensive internet security and total security packages. We proudly offer a complete suite of enterprise solutions, which includes our cutting-edge industry and IoT solution, SCADA. Furthermore, our repertoire includes an industrial cybersecurity platform, ensuring that we cover all bases.

The beauty of our strategy lies in its adaptability to suit the specific needs of our clients. Whatever level of assistance they require, we stand prepared to offer our unwavering support.

How is cybersecurity influencing the future of digital transformation, and how vital is it for the transformation to incorporate robust cybersecurity measures?

That is a great question, actually. Digital transformation is a topic that has been extremely popular, especially since COVID. Every government and every country starts to consider digitalizing everything. At the start of COVID, when I was talking to different countries, many of them used to

think that cybersecurity is only a problem for developed nations. They would say, "We'll worry about it later," or "We'll worry about it when something happens." But the reality is that when something has already happened, it's too late. So there were actually many major incidents that occurred—high-profile cyber-attacks around the world—that made the world realize that it's not just a problem for developed nations.

It is something that needs to be prevented. If I were to draw an analogy, just to give you a visual, I would say that digital transformation is like a super-powered car with a great engine. And cybersecurity is like fuel. Without it, no matter how good the car is, it won't be able to run and take you places. So I believe cybersecurity has to be a fundamental consideration, a first-order question, not something you think about only when something has happened. We are actually on a mission. As part of my role, I travel to different

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countries that I'm responsible for—which is quite a lot—to engage with regulators and governments. My goal is to help them build frameworks and structure the critical information infrastructure sector in a way that makes sense and keeps them secure, as well as their people.

Are governments prepared to embrace the necessary changes and adopt these frameworks, or are they prepared to shift their focus towards cybersecurity, from your perspective?

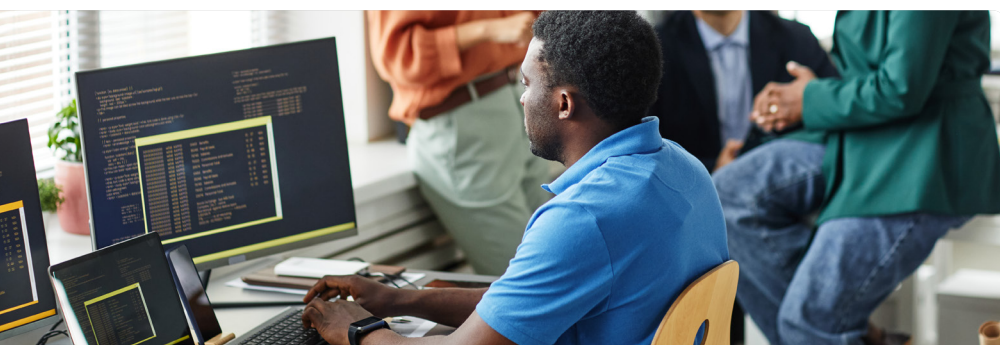
There is no way I can answer this without referring back to

the impact of COVID. During the COVID pandemic, there was a distinct disparity. Many countries were practically paralyzed, allocating a significant 80% of their fiscal budget each year to combat COVID through healthcare initiatives, constructing hospitals, and funding vaccinations. This required a substantial amount of financial resources. However, while COVID is not entirely behind us, we have learned to coexist with it, likening it to the common flu. Consequently, people are now shifting their focus and recognizing the need to redirect resources towards national security. National security encompasses various aspects,

with cyber security taking centre stage due to the prevalence of cyber attacks and incidents. While physical attacks and terrorism still make headlines, the majority of threats now emanate from the cyber realm. Therefore, cyber security has become synonymous with national security. It is encouraging to see an increasing number of countries and governments open to discussing these matters with us.

And now, for my last inquiry, what are your expectations for Kaspersky in the forthcoming years? How do you envision the future of corporate Kaspersky and the realm of cybersecurity?

The future of Kaspersky in the cybersecurity industry is exceptionally promising. As mentioned earlier, numerous countries worldwide are devoting substantial attention to this field. There is a wealth of ongoing



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cybersecurity awareness and emphasize its significance.

Considering the extensive work that lies ahead, we are fully committed to maintaining our leadership position in the industry. We strive to set the highest standards and aspire to be the benchmark for ensuring a safer tomorrow. The future looks bright, and we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute.

discussions and actions required to address the challenges. We have already established partnerships with many of these countries, collaborating on the development of national frameworks. Additionally, we work closely with large enterprises, and small-medium businesses, and conduct nationwide campaigns targeting individuals of all ages, including children, families, and the elderly. Our aim is to promote



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