

Data protection firm plans huge expansion

By CHENG YU
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Data-related service provider Veeam Software is betting big on the Chinese market, and especially on the opportunities created by the country's big data push as well as reform and opening-up, according to Veeam's top executive.

"Chinese enterprises have greater demands on data storage, protection and cloud technologies as the country pushes forward big data and digital economic transformation, which has brought us great and precious opportunities," said Shi Qin, president of Veeam China.

"China, undoubtedly, has played a crucial role in our global business and is expected to get into a fast-growing period in the coming years," he added.

Shi's comments come as the country calls for accelerated efforts to implement and advance big data strategy in a bid to improve digital infrastructure, promote integration of digital resources including big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence with the real economy.

According to Shi, the company's major business is to provide services that back up and replicate data, helping companies recover lost data and maintain continuity.

The Baar, Switzerland-based company entered the Chinese market just two and a half years ago but has seen rapid development since then. In 2017, its sales volume grew by 60 percent year-on-year in China.

It recently acquired N2WS, a leading provider of backup and disaster recovery for Amazon Web Services (AWS), in an all-cash deal for \$42.5 million, to bolster its competitiveness.

"For a company, if a machine stops, even for a minute, the cost is incalculable, not to mention long-term downtime. Thus, data protection and recovery is of great necessity for companies," Shi said.

In China, the company has expanded its businesses in a wide range of areas, especially in the finance and retail sectors. For instance, Veeam is cooperating with Chinese internet giants Alibaba Group Holding Ltd and Tencent Holdings Ltd on data protec-

tion and backup.

"In the finance sector, for example, financial institutions need to deploy solutions to ensure availability faced with an increased risk of cyberattacks, data breaches and unplanned disruptions nowadays," he said.

"This is a new kind of solution that delivers nonstop continuity and a 24x7x365 business," he added.

According to Shi, Veeam is able to recover any data in a maximum of 15 minutes, while common competitors require hours — at least — to accomplish the same goal.

"China's data backup and disaster recovery market is a huge gold field as data security is critical for both the country and companies," said Wu Yuliang, a senior expert in data backup and also a member of the Jiusan Society, an organization that mainly consists of intellectuals from fields including science and technology.

"The sector has great potential and waits to be further explored," he said, adding that the market scale of China's data backup and disaster recovery is expected to be tens of billions of yuan in the future.

Shi noted that the business environment is getting better and better and foreign companies are more welcome in China thanks to the reform and opening-up.

"However, at the same time, the country also has higher expectations for foreign companies to enter the Chinese market and pay more attention to advanced technologies," he said.

To adapt to the changes and growth of the Chinese market, Shi said localization is becoming very crucial and the company is scrambling to transform from "product output" to "service output" here.

In other words, rather than simply selling products, the Swiss company has endeavored to cooperate more with partners from China, providing more technologies and services related to cloud, data protection and replication.

In addition, the company said it will also help Chinese companies moving into overseas markets, especially with the Belt and Road Initiative.



A steward offers snacks to passengers in a train on the Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway. XINHUA

Chinese rail technology boosting trade in Africa

New transport services facilitate connectivity, lift manufacturing

NAIROBI — China's railway technology is beneficial to boosting integration, trade and industrialization in Africa, said Jean-Jacque Bouya, the Minister of Territorial Management and Major Projects of the Republic of Congo.

The minister, who visited Kenya as part of a benchmarking tour on the success of the China-funded Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway (SGR), said Beijing has emerged as a significant partner in Africa's quest to modernize transport infrastructure.

"We can strengthen China-Africa cooperation and discuss implementation of infrastructure projects that can boost connectivity in line with the Belt and Road Initiative," Bouya told the Xinhua News Agency in a recent interview.

On Sunday, Bouya rode on the SGR passenger train and later took an inspection tour of the new berth at the port of Mombasa developed by the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC).

Bouya noted that the SGR passenger and cargo services have improved connectivity, boosted cross-border trade, revived the manufacturing sector and created jobs.

"The SGR is a good project that will act like a belt to connect this region and the continent. It has also given jobs to young people and realigns with our leaders' vision to enhance connectivity and integration," the minister said.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta launched the SGR passenger train dubbed Madaraka Express

on May 31, 2017.

According to SGR's contractor and operator, the CRBC, about one million passengers have since traveled on the Madaraka Express between Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa.

Bouya said the successful launch of the 480 km SGR in Kenya has inspired other African countries to follow suit.

"What is important is for African countries to have similar projects like the SGR because it will boost our economies," Bouya said, adding that infrastructure development is the embodiment of win-win cooperation between China and African countries.

He praised the launch of the SGR cargo service for reducing the cost of transporting goods from Mombasa to Kenya's hinterland, hence stimulating commerce in the country.

"The cargo train has brought economic benefits. It

has reduced the cost of transporting a container by half. It is good for the economic development of Kenya and Africa," Bouya said.

He said that the Republic of Congo, a mineral-rich country in central Africa, is ready to engage with China as it embarks on modernizing key infrastructure such as railways and ports.

"In Congo-Brazzaville, we have a maritime port and an old railway. If we build a new railway network, we will reduce the cost of transport and boost industrialization," Bouya said.

"We plan to develop this project soon and discuss the best approach with the CRBC," he added.

Bouya said the Republic of Congo, which has a population of 5 million people, intends to harness a commodities boom to modernize key economic sectors such as manufacturing.

"The cargo train has brought economic benefits. It

Samsung to begin work on chip unit

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd plans to begin building its new memory chip production line in China in late March, a spokesman said on Thursday, as the tech giant ramps up efforts to boost NAND flash technology to meet future demand.

The tech giant said in August last year that it expected to invest \$7 billion over the next three years to expand its NAND memory chip production in Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi province, but had not specified a future schedule.

The rapidly growing data center market, which needs more memory capacity to handle increasing data traffic, is expected to underpin revenue growth and margins for Samsung's NAND Flash business in 2018, research provider Trendforce said.

“Memory chips are solid. For DRAM chips, server demand is very strong.”

Kwon Sung-ryul, an analyst at DB Investment & Securities

Currently, Samsung holds a monopoly position in the field of storage chips. Its revenue from NAND in the fourth quarter of 2017 rose 9.8 percent from the previous quarter to \$6.17 billion, Trendforce said, as demand from both smartphone and server markets lifted shipments and average prices.

Samsung will formally begin the process near month-end at Xi'an, earmarked for NAND flash production, the spokesman said, but did not give any other details.

Shares of Samsung Electronics have risen about 13 percent from early March on an improved outlook for the memory chip market, putting to rest concerns that the recent boom might end, analysts said.

Last month, the South Korean tech heavyweight signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Development and Reform Commission, the nation's top economic regulator, with a focus on possible cooperation in chipmaking, artificial intelligence and semiconductor manufacturing.

The cooperation came after the NDRC spoke to Samsung in December after the prices of storage chips rose at an astonishing pace over the past 18 months.

"Memory chips are solid. For DRAM chips, server demand is very strong," said Kwon Sung-ryul, an analyst at DB Investment & Securities.

"NAND flash chip shipments and price movements are moving within expectations, but there's a chance that supply will become tighter again in the second half of 2018 due to rising demand."

The expansion is not expected to affect memory chip supply until 2019 at the earliest, analysts said.

Avnet turns to autonomous driving car market for growth

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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Major equipment suppliers for autonomous driving cars are vying for the electronic component market, which will reach an estimated \$150 billion by 2030, and Arizona-headquartered US firm Avnet is one of them.

The number of electronic parts and components used in a car has seen a huge increase in the past decade, as their combined value per car surged from 20 yuan (\$3.17) to 30 yuan 10 years ago to 400-500 yuan currently, said Frederick Fu, president of Avnet Asia-Pacific, a leading global distributor of electronic

components and technology solutions provider.

"The ongoing driverless trend is going to create a bigger electronic components market than that in the smartphone sector," Fu said.

According to Fu, electronic components will be widely applied in a car's control system, dashboard, entertainment system and air conditioner, as well as the future driverless system.

"It is projected that by 2030, there will be 150 million autonomous cars driving in the world, which means a \$150 billion market is forming for electronic component distributors like Avnet. Every company in the industry would try their best to seize

“The ongoing driverless trend is going to create a bigger electronic components market than that in the smartphone sector.”

Frederick Fu, president of Avnet Asia-Pacific

the market opportunity."

According to Navigant Research, 120 million autonomous cars will be sold from 2020 to 2035.

To adapt to the new trend, Avnet, after four years of research and development, has launched an advanced driver assistance system (ADAS) tailored for the China market.

"The system is designed to be applicable and affordable for all cars. Next year, cars sold in China will be possibly carrying our system, as mass production will kick off in early 2019," Fu said.

The system is expected to become more sophisticated and wide-ranging and will move up through defined levels of autonomy toward the

"ultimate destination" of fully autonomous driving in the future, Fu added.

The global automotive electronics market is forecast to grow significantly over the coming years. In particular, the market value of entertainment, body electronics and advanced driver assistance systems will expand to about \$150 billion in 2020, according to Fu.

"The self-driving car will not only offer a completely new driving experience, but also change the entire automotive industry. ... The goal is to let driving ... become safer, easier and more enjoyable with the ADAS system," he said.

Since its design center spe-

cialized for automotive and industrial application was established in Shanghai 15 years ago, the automotive sector has now grown into Avnet's second largest business in China, and Fu believed the sector will continue to expand.

From August 2014 to June 2017, some \$76 billion has been invested in autonomous vehicles, according to a new report from the Brookings Institution. Investment not only comes from major automakers such as Daimler, BMW, Volkswagen, General Motors and Ford Motor, but also from high-tech players such as Intel, Apple and Baidu.

Southwestern province ropes in experts for technological advances, breakthroughs in driverless vehicles ahead of key road tests

A group of engineers and experts in autonomous driving and deep learning joined forces in Guiyang, Guizhou province on Friday to build two driverless vehicles and test them on the road.

The move marks a milestone for Guizhou in its bid to gather expertise and resources related to driverless vehicles to spur innovation for economic development.

Up to 30 engineers from 12 countries and regions

including Canada, the United States, Singapore and Japan will join hands at the Move-it Hackathon, a cooperation camp focusing on driverless cars, to co-develop such vehicles this week.

"We are exploring a brand-new way of developing, manufacturing and applying cars and we called for global engineers to improve related technologies together," said Li Yaling, general manager of Move-it, a local shared platform and one of the initiators of the camp.

The move came as China calls for more efforts to develop advanced manufacturing and promote further integration of the internet, big data and artificial intelligence with the real economy.

In line with the country's rapid development of advanced manufacturing, Guizhou has pushed forward innovation of cutting-edge technologies to promote economic transformation.

Nestled in a mountainous

region, it has been transformed in the past three years into an innovation hub as major global companies, such as Apple Inc, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd and Hyundai Motor Group, flocked to the area.

"To develop autonomous driving, Guizhou is competitive in its favorable policies, abundant resources and low costs," said Weng Wei, executive director of Velodyne Lidar, a US lidar company.

"It is a challenge for com-

panies to develop driverless cars in Guizhou since it is a hilly area. However, it will not be a big problem with the help of advanced technologies," he added.

The newly established program will be located in the intelligent manufacturing factory of FlexBot, an initiator of the activity and a local drone company.

Yu Chuan, CEO of FlexBot, said: "We used to focus on drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, and this has brought us some knowledge

of technologies used in doing unmanned projects."

"We hope that this activity will help to solve some common problems in autonomous driving through cooperating and sharing, which furthermore will lower the threshold of developing such cars," Yu said.

The company added that they will test autonomous driving this year and will endeavor to start commercialization in 2019.

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