

Building up without base



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The way technology dictates our public and private worlds has evolved into revolutionary information and communication technology (ICT)-led concepts of smart cities, energy efficiency, and smart homes to maximize use of existing resources and save time. And along with that it has further underscored the need for a mature cyber security ecosystem at its bottom. However the gap between the two is clearly enormous. How smart would be smart cities?

How Smart are Smart Cities?

One of the most ambitious programmes of Prime Minister - Smart Cities Mission seems a bit farfetched as of now. The government had last year announced to create 100 smart cities by 2022 via digitally enabling infrastructure with the use of information and communication technology. However, the project runs the risk of becoming shambolic in future as infrastructure has to exist in the first place for the government to make it smart. So the problem is not of having a stressed infrastructure but of an inadequate one. Another big challenge is the societal behavior of Indians.

“ Indians blindly copy past culture of western countries to fix every other local problems except when it comes to curbing our infrastructural menace. For example, in Europe you can set up a waste management system or garbage tracking system to keep roads clean. This won't work in India because basic infrastructure such as garbage bins and proper sewage system is missing. On top of it, people here don't have civic sense,” says Ravinder Pal Singh, Director - Mega Projects, Public Sector Vertical, Dell International Services India.

Amongst the most pressing issues in India has been of traffic management. However, the situation isn't unique in any form to Indian cities. " There are cities globally where roads are narrower and traffic density is higher than Indian roads, and still they don't have problems of traffic congestion.

Through video analytics we can track people who try to subvert rules and we can enforce the right behavior and discipline in them," adds Singh.

Energy efficiency is another way to be looked at making cities cleaner along with smarter wherein start-ups like Bengaluru-based Lithium Urban Technologies are already making a move. The company offers 100 percent emission free green mobility solutions through its fleet of around 200 electric cars for corporates.

" We look at mobility in terms of energy efficiency and the mode of transport that can move people from one place to another in the most energy efficient way. Today you see a small electric car, tomorrow there will be bigger cars, mini vans, buses etc., as a significant percentage of urban mobility will be electric," says Sanjay Krishnan, Founder and CEO, Lithium Urban Technologies.

From public to private world, internet of things (IoT) is changing the way humans interact with devices, even inside their homes. Home automation as per a white paper published by energy management and automation giant Schneider Electric last year, is growing 30 percent annually. However the market is yet to take off in India.

" Home automation today is in the fringes of nice-to-have products but even smartphones once were just nice to have products which became need-

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to-have products with incremental development and better user experience,” says Nithin K David, Partner at Noida-based IoT start-up Oakter. “ There are two factors of cost and features or quality. If we are able to balance out what a consumer gets in terms of features or quality and what he pays for that perspective, then home automation products will see better adoption,” echoes Saurav Kumar, Founder, Cube26 - a mobile technology start-up based in Delhi.

Hackers’ Den

Amidst technology re-shaping future evolution of humans and businesses, lies the danger of breach of security and information that comes along with it. As per a 2015 KPMG report on cybercrime in India, 72 percent businesses faced some sort of cyber attack in the preceding year and 63 percent faced financial loss.

Today going digital is not just about office automation, what it also means is enhancing customer experience and getting competitive advantage. This in turn means that digital has a direct impact on businesses’ balance sheets. Now that has got even more worrying as entrepreneurs realize that if their digital get hacked, it will be severe to their businesses including its stakeholders.

“ This is the reason that there has been an increase in the amount of money and focus by companies on cyber security measures over the last few years,” says Saket Modi, Co-founder and CEO, Lucideus - an IT risk assessment and digital security services provider.

Globally hacks and hackers have changed in last years from being pranksters to being used for state sponsoredterrorism, and by governments as well. “ China has buildings full of professional hackers deployed by the government with the objective of hacking into corporate and other governments’ digital infrastructure and getting beneficial information. When it comes to India, it will still take time for our companies to get matured in cyber security measures,” adds Modi.

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