

Converge to use analytics platform for key decisions

BROADBAND internet service provider Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. said it will be maximizing Tableau, an analytics platform, in arriving at key business decisions.

The company said that it is aiming to leverage its collection of data to come up with “actionable insights in its operations.”

“The first order of business was to transform the data to be the ‘single source of truth’ for the company. Once that was put in place, the company was able to visualize a complete picture of our operations that allowed better efficiency from port utilization, turn-in, order

fulfillment, account lifecycle, payment behavior, churn, and even collection performances,” Converge Chief Information Officer Ulysses C. Naguit said.

For Converge, Tableau helps in gathering, analyzing and visualizing the efforts and campaigns that worked at the operational level.

“Through visual analytics, we were able to make crucial business decisions just in time. It has led us to better allocation of resources and that includes plugging the cost drain brought by activities that weren’t helping the bottom line,” Mr. Naguit said.

“The world has changed over the last few years and every company has to do more with less as we navigate through multiple challenges in the macroeconomic landscape,” Tableau ASEAN Area Vice-President Akkasha Sultan said.

As businesses look to not only survive, but deliver success now and for the future, they need to undergo a data transformation that delivers actionable insights for decision-making,” he added.

Tableau is an analytics platform brand acquired by New York-listed Salesforce, which is a global leader in customer relationship management. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Globe, Japan firm to complete subsea cable laying by April

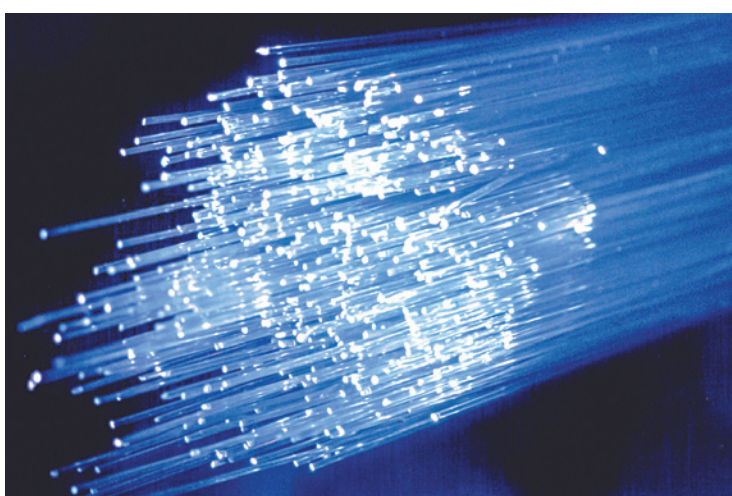
GLOBE Telecom, Inc. and its partners have commissioned a Japanese company to finish by April the last leg of a submarine cable network that will bring fiber connectivity to remote areas of the country.

In a press release on Wednesday, Globe said Japan-based NTT World Engineering Marine Corp. or NTT WE Marine is set to land and lay cables in the nine remaining segments of the \$150-million Philippine Domestic Submarine Cable Network (PDCSN).

“With the final phase of the PDCSN in motion, we are excited to take a major step towards our goal of nation-building through digitalization,” Globe President and Chief Executive Officer Ernest L. Cu said.

“This is a crucial step towards bridging the digital divide and providing equitable and reliable connectivity, which is essential for the economic and social development of our country,” he added.

The project, which covers a total cable distance of 2,500 kilometers, started in July



DENNY MÜLLER/UNSPLASH

2022. The last leg will be done through cable ship Subaru, one of NTT WE Marine’s cable-laying vessels.

The PDCSN, through its continuous cable landings, will cover Calatrava, Romblon; Pasacao, Camarines Sur; Bulan, Sorsogon; Calbayog City, Samar; Palanas, Masbate; Mactan, Cebu; Maasin City, Southern Leyte; Claver, Surigao del Norte; Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental; Camiguin; Dipolog, Zamboanga

del Norte; Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte; and Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur.

Globe said that it has been “aggressive in expanding its network to meet the growing demand for connectivity amid increased digitalization.”

NTT WE Marine has a local branch and offices in Nagasaki and Yokohama, Japan.

In a separate press release, Globe said that it will be rolling out 30 booths to assist in the reg-

istration of subscriber identity module (SIM) cards from Feb. 1 to 3.

The company aims to open registration assistance booths in far-flung towns from northern to southern provinces to reach as many customers as possible before the April 26 deadline.

The SIM registration booths will be open to all and are put in place to help senior citizens, persons with disability, and those using basic phones without internet access.

The rollout is part of the National Telecommunications Commission’s initiative, which followed the first round in January, where the company deployed booths in 15 areas from Jan. 25 to 27.

By the end of January, Globe said it logged over 11 million registered prepaid SIMs.

“Globe is again urging its customers to plan and schedule their registration, as failure to do so within deadline will lead to SIM deactivation,” the company added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**



BW FILE PHOTO

PLDT, Cisco: Make digital transformation a priority

OFFICIALS of the PLDT group and technology company Cisco Systems, Inc. have called on business organizations to make digital transformation a priority in adapting to the so-called new normal.

“With today’s ever-changing business landscape, enterprises are seeing the need to adapt because consumers are changing the way they consume products and services: they want goods and services delivered in a convenient, timely, and secure manner,” ePLDT President and Chief Executive Officer Victor S. Genuino said in a statement.

Businesses should realize that to adapt to the new normal, they should transform as well, said Mr. Genuino, who heads the information and communications technology of telecommunications company PLDT Inc.

Meanwhile, Simon Rizkallah, head of Cisco’s AppDynamics for Asia-Pacific, Japan and China, said companies must always put the end user in mind.

“We also understand that digital transformation really oc-

curs with the service provider,” he said, as he commended PLDT for managing during the pandemic “to live up to the level that customers were looking for and enable people to operate their businesses, for people to work from home, and for kids to continue their education through e-learning.”

Mr. Rizkallah added that digital transformation is still evolving from automation to sustainability in smart infrastructure and data security.

“For us at Cisco, the Environmental, Social, and Governance requirement is top of mind. So, everything that’s going to come out from Cisco moving forward is going to be focused on power and how we can become greener for the environment,” he said.

According to Mr. Rizkallah, Cisco is keeping security at the top of its priorities.

“We’ve seen hacks across the globe and power utilities, so, [for us and service providers] how do we protect this critical infrastructure as it becomes digital?” he added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**



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Britain’s first cryptocurrencies regulations to set ‘robust’ standards

LONDON — Britain’s finance ministry plans “robust” regulations for crypto assets, following the collapse of crypto exchange FTX last year, which left millions of people nursing billions of dollars in losses.

Crypto is currently unregulated globally, with firms only having to carry out checks to prevent money laundering. However, Britain’s Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has said that more than 80% of licence applicants were unable to show they could do this properly as “dark money” flows through the sector.

The draft rules, to be published on Wednesday, would ensure robust, transparent, and fair standards, consistent with the approach to traditional finance, Financial Services Minister Andrew Griffith said in a statement on Tuesday.

“We remain steadfast in our commitment to grow the economy and enable technological change and innovation — and this includes cryptoasset technology,” Mr. Griffith said.

The new rules come after rising interest rates led to a string of bankruptcies in the sector in 2022, wiping \$1.4 trillion off the value of the crypto market. The price of bitcoin, the most widely traded, plunged 60%.

The market rout shook confidence in cryptocurrencies, though interest in the underly-

ing technology, most commonly known as blockchain, for other uses like payments remains.

There will be a three-month public consultation on the new plans, followed by proposals for detailed rules from the FCA.

The ministry said its approach would mitigate the most significant risks in the sector.

“These proposals will place responsibility on crypto trading venues for defining the detailed content requirements for admission and disclosure documents — ensuring crypto exchanges have fair and robust standards,” the ministry said.

There will be rules for financial intermediaries, which facilitate transactions, and custodians, which store customer assets.

The failure of FTX and other exchanges triggered calls for regulation of the industry to protect investors. Regulators are focusing on prising open “crypto conglomerates” which combine activities like trading, lending and custody under one roof, but with traditional regulatory safeguards between them absent.

The European Union is already finalizing its first set of crypto rules.

Firms already authorized by the FCA would be temporarily allowed to issue their own promotions, while the new regulatory regime is being introduced, the ministry said. — **Reuters**

S. Korea slides toward recession as exports plunge

SEOUL — South Korea’s economy inched toward its first recession in three years as data on Wednesday showed its January trade deficit soared to a record thanks to a plunge in exports caused by a combination of long holidays and cooling global demand.

Asia’s fourth-largest economy, which relies heavily on trade for growth, shrank by 0.4% in the October-December quarter and is now on the brink of falling into what would be its first recession since the middle of 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exports fell 16.6% in January from a year earlier, trade ministry data showed, worse than an 11.3%

decline predicted in a Reuters survey and the fastest drop in exports since May 2020.

Imports fell 2.6% compared with a year earlier, less than a 3.6% drop predicted in the survey. As a result, the country posted a monthly trade deficit of \$12.69 billion, setting a record amount for any month.

“I have a zero percent forecast for the first-quarter growth but today’s trade figures are definitely a minus to that,” said Park Sang-hyun, economist at HI Investment and Securities.

The increasing chances of recession — two consecutive quarters of decline in gross domestic product — also underscore

growing bets in markets that the central bank’s campaign of raising interest rates since late 2021 has run its course.

Leading the sluggish trade performance in January were a 44.5% dive in semiconductor exports and a whopping 31.4% plunge in sales to China, the trade ministry data showed. Both were the worst rates of decline since the 2008/2009 global financial crisis.

South Korean bond yields fell across the board on the growing bets for a less restrictive monetary policy ahead, while stock and currency investors largely shrugged off the monthly figures.

Finance Minister Choo Kyung-ho blamed long lunar New Year

holidays in China and a steep fall in computer chip prices versus a year ago for the sharp declines in export values, adding China’s reopening would help ease the situation over time.

“The government will mobilize all available policy resources to help support a drive to boost exports so that the timing of improvement in trade balance can be advanced,” Mr. Choo said at a meeting of trade-related officials, without elaborating.

The government has forecast this year’s exports would fall 4.5% after posting a 6.1% gain in 2022, and the trade ministry has said it would do what it can to avert a decline. — **Reuters**

Boeing delivers last 747, saying goodbye to ‘Queen of the Skies’

SEATTLE — Boeing bid farewell to the iconic 747, delivering the final plane to Atlas Air on Tuesday afternoon and marking an end of an era when the first-ever “jumbo jet” ruled the skies.

Thousands of Boeing employees — including some of the so-called “Incredibles” who developed the jet in the 1960s — watched the last delivery of the historic plane, which brought air travel to the masses and represented an indelible slice of Americana.

The event at the mammoth manufacturing plant was capped off by a celebrity appearance by John Travolta, who recounted learning to fly the 747-400 as an ambassador for Qantas Airlines. “[It was] the toughest program that any commercial pilot will ever have to endure,” said Mr. Travolta, who called the jet the “most well thought out and safest aircraft ever built.”

Known as the “Queen of the Skies,” the 747 was the world’s first twin-aisle jetliner, which Boeing designed and built in 28 months and Pan Am introduced in 1970.

“It’s the airplane that redefined the industry and redefined air travel,” said Guy Norris, co-author of

“Boeing 747: Design and Development Since 1969.”

British billionaire entrepreneur Richard Branson, who was inspired to start an airline with a single Boeing 747 after getting stuck on a delayed flight, earlier on Tuesday called it a “wonderful beast” as he bid farewell.

Boeing’s Everett, Washington, facility has been the 747’s production site since the plane’s conception. Built in 1967 to produce the mammoth jet, it remains the world’s largest manufacturing plant according to Boeing.

But after five decades, customer demand for the 747 eroded as Boeing and Airbus A380 developed more fuel efficient two-engine widebody planes. When Boeing confirmed in July 2020 that it would end 747 production, it was already only producing at a rate of half an aircraft a month.

Boeing delivered five 747s in 2022, while in 1990, the peak delivery year of the bestselling 747-400 version, Boeing delivered 70 747s.

As different sections of the last 747 — the wings or fuselage structures, for example — were complete, the production line “just slowly started to



PIERGIULIANO CHESI

BOEING Everett Factory where the Boeing 747 was assembled.

shut down,” said Kim Smith, Boeing’s vice president and general manager for the 747 and 767 programs.

Smith said all 747 program workers were transferred to other jobs or voluntarily retired.

The last 747 rolled out on Dec. 7, capping the program at 1,574 total. The plane has since completed inspections and flight tests, flying to Portland over the holidays to get a paint job. The plane will fly off on Wednesday morning to Atlas’ headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio.

While Boeing also builds the 767 and 777 in Everett, the company has yet to decide which program will permanently

take over the 747 production bay, which is currently being used for 787 inventory and 777X work, Ms. Smith said.

Boeing will remain tied to the 747 through the aftermarket business and the Air Force One replacement program, which Boeing won in 2018.

The heir apparent to the 747, the 777X will not be ready for delivery until 2025, but Boeing Chief Executive David Calhoun focused his goodbye on that future: “The 777, the next plane to dominate this space, displaced all its competition just like that — and we haven’t even introduced the best version.” — **Reuters**