

IBM partners Reliance, Kone, KPIT for Internet of Things

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Information technology (IT) giant IBM says it has tied up with Reliance Group's UNLIMIT, with Kone, KPIT and agricultural technology entity Avanijal Agro to jointly build Internet of Things (IoT) solutions for customers in this country.

IBM and UNLIMIT will co-create IoT solutions for specific industry segments, such as automotives, insurance, utilities, and industrial automation. For example, they say, insurance companies will be able to reduce the cost of damage to goods from tampering through real-time tracking of cargo via an 'asset tracking solution.'

UNLIMIT and IBM are also developing IoT solutions for implementation across Reliance Group companies, addressing segments such as user-based insurance (Reliance General Insurance), asset and vehicle tracking (Reliance Commercial Finance), telecom tower monitoring (Reliance Communications) and power transformer maintenance (BSES, Reliance Energy). Through this collaboration, UNLIMIT will have access to IBM's global system of partners.

IBM will provide its Watson IoT Platform to collect and connect data from devices and provide use case-specific dashboards. UNLIMIT will design IoT use cases for various industries in the Indian market and build these on the Watson IoT Platform. The latter provides device registration, IoT rules, advanced analytics, visualisation, dashboards, reports and cognitive capabilities for each use case.

IBM has also, as mentioned, announced partnerships with Kone, KPIT, Tech Mahindra, Avanijal and Accull Labs (a health technology start-up) for IoT.

Industries that see a lot of interest for IoT globally and in India are automotives as in connected cars, insurance based on usage of vehicles, shop floor automation for maintenance of machines, electronics (including smart household goods), and travel and transportation management. Each of these provide much scope for products, gathering of data and monetising it, apart from making life easier.

With a boom expected in the IoT market here, is there a need to introduce a level of standardisation? "I think it is important to provide a general template for industries to work with, where we provide around 80 per cent of the work and 20 per cent can be added, based on their requirements. This will provide a level of standardisation to the

'Manufacturing sector faces cultural barrier in digital shift'

AYAN PRAMANIK
Bengaluru, 18 September

L&T Technology Services Chief Executive Officer Keshab Panda (*pictured*) said manufacturing companies would need a major "cultural shift" before they adopt new technologies such as the Internet of things (IoT).

Panda said he had seen a cultural barrier among customers towards digital transformation even as the manufacturing sector was readying for the age of smart factories. Panda, an aerospace engineer who has worked on India's light combat aircraft Tejas and in the country's satellite programme, said the shift towards technology-enabled manufacturing practices, where data from machines would automate operations, had just begun.

"The engineering transformation has started and 75 per cent of our customers are still thinking about how to go about it," said Panda sharing his

experience after speaking to clients in the US. Indian information technology services providers and engineering solutions providers see



this industrial transformation as a big opportunity. Companies in Japan, Germany and the US are moving towards an era where machine data will determine efficiency in a factory.

L&T Technology Services has developed a digital technology platform called UBIQWeise to offer data-based smart factory services. It has similar platforms for industries such as transportation, health care, telecom and utilities.

The company earns nearly 14 per cent of its revenue from digital technology-based services and is counting heavily on these platforms to hasten growth.

"Clients are asking how do we improve the customer experience. We have 257 patents filed in areas like IoT and the smart building platform. We will work more in this area," added Panda.

The company's other platforms for engineering services include i-BEMS and Smart Mesh Network for better use of energy.

Panda said "data security" would become a priority for businesses and services providers, including L&T Technology Services, needed to "do more" on that front.

KS Viswanathan, vice-president, industry initiatives, Nasscom, said manufacturing companies were getting ready for the digital shift.

"Companies such as GE, Daimler, Mitsubishi and others have drawn up plans and are working on them. But Indian service providers do not have large format domain knowledge ready yet and on many occasions they are co-creating," said Viswanathan.

vast technology," said Sanjay Brahmawar, general manager, IBM Watson IoT.

"The variation in products varies a lot in IoT for automobiles, depending on models. We manage these variations with IBM tools, part of a continuous engineering portfolio," said Samir Kulkarni, associate vice-president at KPIT. He added they were looking at leveraging IoT in smart manufacturing, apart from transportation and automotives. The company has an existing IoT system in Pune that tracks the bus service and provides realtime updates, part of the smart city pro-

grammes in the country.

Further, many of these companies that implement IBM's IoT platform, such as Pune-based Datamato, often become the face of IBM for these organisations.

A recent report from Nasscom, the IT sector's apex association, predicts India will soon have 1.9 billion IoT devices, reaching a \$9-bn market.

"With 2.7 bn connected devices and growing, the Indian economy, enterprises and consumers are embracing IoT at a rampant pace," says Harriet Green, general manager at Watson IoT for customer engagement and education.