THE HANDELOT TIMES

March 2018 #6

HANDELOT AWARDS 2018
9

THE OLD HANDS BLOG
16-20

CYBER INSURANCE RE-THINKING
24-25

HANDELOT USA TRIP 2018
28

SECURITY IN IT

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DIGITAL CRIME

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THE HANDELOT TIMES - THE ONLINE MAGAZINE

MARCH 2018

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10 YEARS

ON THE MARKET

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 The Traders Issue
5 Yukatel - Pioneer in Dropshipping
6-7 Airpods Here to Stay
8 Digital Smile - Your business Partner in Need
9 Handelot awards 2018
10-11 HANDELOT AMBASSADOR Kazi Najib Ashraf
12 Best movers on handelot.com
13 Kamkwat Xiaomi Specialist
14-15 VIP Gold members
16-20 The old hand WOULD I-COULD I-SHOULD I?
21 VIP Stamps
22-23 Cryptocurrency_ Getting Hit and Popping Up Again
24-25 Cyber Insurance Re-thinking
26-27 NOKIA On The Comeback Trail
28 Handelot USA Trip 2018
29 Pricelist handelot
30 Logistics and Services on handelot
31 XTG - Smoke from a Drop Shipper
32-33 Stay Safe Out there
34-35 Take Away from the east
36 New Games March & April
37 H-Asia official meizu distributor
38 Rational FX
39 Corporate News

THE TRADER'S ISSUE

In this issue of the Handelot Times commemorating the company's ten year anniversary, rather than simply celebrating ourselves, we are reaffirming our commitment to you, the trader. You come to the Handelot two reasons: analysis on booming markets of the Eastern Hemisphere, and opinions and breakdowns of the rumours and speculation surrounding new smart devices and other technologies and concerns.

This issue, you can expect nothing but the very best in our coverage of these areas. One of our pieces contrasts the shipment situations in China and India, which tell stories of crystallization and fluid movement, respectively. The details behind each may alarm you, and we break down what these situations mean for the trading business. And of course, the rumour mill is in full swing as always. This issue, we cover the rise and fall – and possible rise again – of former giant Nokia. They are taking steps to make the break into the smartphone that they never quite had, and with rumours that they plan to stuff their upcoming breakout device with a five camera setup, we openly discuss if they are for real.

And as the Chinese market tightens up, another issue raises its head in regard to a ban on cryptocurrency mining and trading in that country. The Handelot Times begins a foray into cryptocurrency coverage by looking at the particulars of the ban, and also looking at an unlikely country that might take its place: Iceland.

We also want to be at your side when it comes to securing your information and revenue. This month The Handelot Times features a pair of articles related to information breaches and cyber-security. The first takes a look at a few of the worst hacks of the 21st century, discussing and highlighting potential weak spots that may exist in your system, as well as what not to do in the event of a security breach. The second analyzes the global state of cyber-insurance: who's using it, who's not, what it covers, what it should cover, and why you should consider getting a policy if you do not already.

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AIRPODS: HERE TO STAY

A full year has passed since Apple released the first iteration of their wireless earphones, the AirPods. Upon release it was easy to crack wise at the product's introduction. Once a mobile technology innovator, Apple has gotten a reputation of being behind the times in recent years as they have introduced their takes on features earlier introduced by other companies, such as facial recognition technology. What's more, their recent foray into smartwatch technology was met with an icy reception. To top it all off, the fact that the unveiling of the AirPods was coupled with the decision to completely remove the headphone jack from the iPhone. The derisive murmurs started up once again: if wireless earbuds, or "hearables" as they're increasingly called, already exist, how good – and necessary – could these AirPods possibly be?

It turns out: really good and necessary. Though the product's release was delayed, and though they they don't sport the prettiest design, a joint survey by Creative Strategies and Experian has found that 98% of AirPod users had positive feedback. Respondents cited sound quality and battery life as reasons for their satisfaction, and a majority of them even went so far as to say that using them made them consume more audio content. Even regarding the widely-reported complaint that they don't fit snugly in the ears and fall out, the survey found that 93% of users were satisfied. Most of all, the AirPods' price point is not at the high end of the spectrum, being rather competitively prices as wireless earbuds go.

To be truthful, there are lots of little reasons to love the AirPods. Much has been made about the smooth, Bluetooth-enabled connectivity with its parent device, and this combined with the fact that they sync with iCloud means that they fit well within the constellation of Apple devices. AirPods have a control system that works without having to fumble for an iPhone or look at an iWatch: audio can be set to pause automatically when removing them from the user's ears, and Siri can be accessed by tapping them. They're small features, but they put smiles on faces.

Two things can be taken away from the success of the AirPods. The first is good for the Apple brand, as the high satisfaction rate has not only justified their existence, but enabled their evolution. The chargeable carrying case will soon have a wireless version, and the AirPods 2 – which will allegedly have faster wireless connectivity – have been heavily rumoured for some

Once low-hanging fruit for ridicule, Apple's take on wireless earphones has justified itself.

time now and may be unveiled at some point this year. It's a good time to be an Apple fan.

The second is good for the industry as a whole, as the AirPods' success have challenged other companies in the wireless earbud game to do more. The 2018 Consumer Electronics Show saw an uptick in firms offering innovations in hearables. Australian company Nuheara is testing the capabilities of what they can offer in terms of fidelity and sound manipulation, while Qualcomm is aiming to improve connectivity with voice-activated digital assistants and reduce the impact that they have on battery life. Because of other emerging technologies such as Siri and Alexa, earbuds may expand their profile in ways we haven't previously expected.

With the AirPods, Apple recovered some much-needed good will that it has found hard to come by in recent years. Their ability to deliver satisfying innovations, expand upon their previous offerings in novel ways, and drive the competition to try harder to beat them are why they still deserve, and command respect of the highest order.

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THE NEW MIDDLE EAST TRADING PARADIGM

2018 ushered in a new era in the wonderful world of mobile trading in the Middle East; I like to call it the 3rd Dimension after the introduction of VAT in the UAE. Things have changed for the better and there have been significant moves towards the normalization in the trading landscape. As you read this article on the Handelot Newsletter, I would urge the International Trading community to keep a close liaison with your account manager to re-establish and verify your contacts in the Middle East. Handelot keeps a keen eye on the market dynamics and is a great forum to ensure the security of your stock and the capital engaged. Here are the highlights that have shaped the business dynamics:

Move within the Freezone: As the VAT kicks in and the direct implications are for the "Local Market" trading for the walkin customers (Bulk International Buyers), there is a Mass Migration of Traders to the Dubai Airport Freezone. Local market trading is no more feasible and playing around with the invoices would have long lasting repercussions, the authorities in Dubai are truly vigilant and the online system is quite robust to keep track of any fraud. Re-Export business for traders in the region is currently restricted because of specific neighbouring countries issues but new International markets have been identified such as South America. Being in DAFZA provides a seamless flow of stock but with so many traders making a move here, the eventual results would show after a couple of quarters.

Strong In-Country Distribution Opportunities: As Apple and Samsung still rule the Trading arena, the second and third tier brands have started to push and exert their efforts towards the local end users. Sony, Motorola, Nokia, HTC, Oppo and Xiomi are clearly visible. In addition to these the third-tier brands have also been focusing on the KDR's and IR through direct and Van Sales. With the reduction of grey stock in the local market, this would encourage the market to experience the almost defunct brands and in turn would also fuel their trading in the long run. I am sure that in the next 9 months there would be an increasing requirement of non-Samsung / Apple products from across the Middle East. As 40% of all trading still revolves around feature phones, Alcatel has started to gain speed after Nokia in this vertical. There is a clear space for more players in the quality feature phone sector.

Mushrooming of Logistic Companies: Several logistic companies have sprung up after the VAT implementation and more are opening. The reason is simple, the traders would like to keep the stock secured and there would be a lack of space soon with the established players. However, companies like Captain's Freight, Union Logistics, AJ Logistics, Universal Logistics etc still lead the pack with an established name brand and robust services and processes. I would again urge International Traders to check with Handelot as well as the above mentioned Logistic companies regarding the health of the business of your new customers.

Avoid Credit Business: At least for the next 3 quarters, that's till the end of this year one should and must be vigilant in controlling the unsecured credit at all costs. This is a time for flux and getting slowly stable, so not taking any chances is the wise thing to do. Again, check with the Handelot team regarding the players in the market and to avoid all new comers and territories.

Used Mobiles are the new order of the day: This is my personal estimate that around 20% of all trading has now shifted to used mobile phones. Players such as Brightstar, PCS Wireless, Sunstrike International, Leading Edge (Mercantile International), Cenwood, HKG2 etc have full-fledged, active and regular stock and own warehousing facilities. Products are being graded and traded on a mega scale and customers see a perfect mix to ensure profitability. In addition to the mentioned companies, every freight forwarding company now caters to regular stock holding from International players creating a growing business trend. Again, you can contact Handelot or contact me at kazi.najib@playtorium.com for further details on entering this market or understanding the dynamics of the trade. Traders are still a bit worried about pre-payment for stock without inspection as they had suffered in the past with substandard products. The magic formula is to send stock on hold to a Freight Forwarder of your choice but also appoint someone as a consultant to oversee it to avoid misuse. This trend is only poised to grow so do not miss out on this opportunity.

Growth of Service Centres and Technical Facilities: Used Mobile phones as well as increasing technicalities of the products mixed with an influx of grey phones has ushered in this new trend. For the past few months, quite a few companies with mobile technical facilities are available to either repair, refurbish or grade your stock. This is a healthy trend redefining the Industry as the technical services are no more confined to Distributors. Grading and Testing software is available on demand and the local labour charges are quite competitive to have a regional grading setup as well.

As we move to the new era of "Mobile Trading", the coming months and quarters would see a correction in the market separating the boys from the men. I anticipate the revival of the early 2000's where many brands traded and there was a space for multiple players to make money. Within the space of these coming months, the established brands (Sony, Motorola etc) should work hard to fill in the gap and get back to the Top of Mind of the end user.

Happy Trading is Profitable Trading!

HANDELOT WORLDWIDE SPLITDOWN IN REGIONS:

Africa 1% | Asia 12% | Australia 1% | Eastern europe 25% | Middle East 17%

Americas 12% | Western europe 32%

BEST MOVERS ON HANDELOT MARCH 2018

MOBILITY

- 1. Apple 2097 trades
- 2. Samsung 1799 trades
- 3. Xiaomi 681 trades
- 4. Huawei 488 trades
- 5. Samsung LCD 390 trades
- 6. LG 239 trades
- 7. Nokia 232 trades
- 8. Sony 162 trades
- 9. Motorola 195 trades
- 10.CAT 94 trades

INHOME

- 1. Samsung 261 trades
- 2. LG 237 Trades
- 3. Sony 216 trades
- 4. Microsoft 85 trades
- 5. Nintendo 60 Trades
- 6. Philips 58 trades
- 7. Canon 57 trades
- 8. Panasonic 57 trades
- 9. Nikon 50 trades
- 10. GoPro 38 trades

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WOULD I-COULD I-SHOULD I?

I like to consider myself to be a law-abiding citizen of the world. I would have a big hang up about taking a farm tractor on the road without paying my road tax, but at certain times, because of my involvement in technology trading, business I have been made to feel like an international criminal.

What is the reason for this?

The biggest "taboo" subject that existed in the trading business was "duty fraud," or as it was known in the UK, VAT fraud. I am sure we are all very aware of such!

If you're not aware of it, what it involved was a fraudulent company in one EU country importing a product from another company in another EU country. Having no VAT to pay on entry, the fraudsters then sold that product to another company in their receiving country, charging VAT at the standard rate on that sale and not declaring that transaction to the tax authorities. After accumulating the tax revenue through time and transactions, they then disappeared.

Blatant tax fraud indeed.

At one point, the British government issued figures suggesting that VAT fraud on mobile phone trading was costing the UK taxpayers in excess of 6 Billion GBP per annum. With the implementation of intra community transactions in 1993 (and right up until 2006 with the implementation of a reverse charge mechanism), this fraud was prevalent. If the losses were so substantial to the UK treasury then why did they allow it to go on for 13 years with very little disruption or intervention? The reverse charge mechanism immediately stopped the fraud. What is the real truth about this fraud and how has it really affected all of us in the trading business?

I once had an interesting conversation with a senior tax investigation officer. He was convinced that all parallel smartphone trading transactions were a paper exercise in that the phones didn't even exist. I argued that this was total nonsense. He then went on to suggest that if the phones did exist, then ultimately they were not going to the end user. I then asked if he really thought that there was a warehouse at the North Pole where this product had been stockpiled and if there was, why? Maybe Father Christmas had sent the PO! Of course the phones ultimately went to the end user.

The trading business is reliant on buying at the correct price to enable profit. If there exists in the supply chain a huge "black hole" that reduces the purchase price of the product, then it is obvious that all of the new product will be attracted to that black hole, if indeed that black hole is so immense. Deflated in price that product will return at a cheaper price, whence the trader will purchase it and in due course sell it profit.

The trader is not and was not aware of the vendor's margin. Apple boasts that they retain a 46% margin from the manufacture of their product, so how would it be possible for a trader to know he is "buying a product too cheap" if the fraudster who controls the black hole is selling his product with a discount of 10% or more? How is a trader expected to know he is dealing with a fraudster? In my opinion, he doesn't, and neither is it the traders job to know. That responsibility lies well and truly with the tax authorities.

VALUE ADDED
TAX

Tax authorities verify the traders and appoint them with the relevant authentic tax certification as in a unique tax number. In real time the tax authorities have extended transparency to each and every transaction completed, along with full visual sight of the supply chain. A trader does not have that transparency. The tax authorities also have legal powers invested in them on many levels to deal with such issues..

Instead of the tax authorities taking responsibility for their given appointment, they leant on the traders and made them responsible for the companies that they were dealing with. Citing legal leverage gained by them from a previous case known, as Alex Kittle "should have known" when the terminology that they needed to implement was "knew".

With the implementation of joint and several liability, not only did the tax authorities have the power to prosecute a company on the basis that "they should have known" they were also able to make one or all companies in the supply chain responsible for the missing tax. It was totally at their discretion which way they went and to whom they chose to apply joint and several liability.

Hold on a moment: if I order a taxi, complete my journey and the taxi driver charges me twice, once for my fare and again for the guy that came before me who got out of the taxi without paying, would I stand for that? In effect, this is what joint and several liability working with Kittle is: I should have known that the guy before me had run off without paying, so I must also pay his fare along with mine. I should have known that a guy in my supply chain was committing tax fraud, so I have to pay his fine. Did we really believe that this was a correct and acceptable implementation of the law? I certainly didn't, but the tax authorities did and they implemented it.

If you watch the American TV reality show called Judge Judy, who incidentally is a real judge, you will know that she frequently uses the words "would I, could I, should I." If a decision or choice is not defined, especially in law, then how can a judgment possibly be concluded based on the word "should"?

Let's look at this from a trader's perspective. Should I do the deal? I daren't do the deal because I may be breaking the law, because to be honest I really don't know! Does it make me a criminal if I do it, or does it make me a fool if I don't? If we consistently ran our business on that basis then soon we would not have a business to run. Of course, we ran our business like that during these times and that should never have been the case.

We had to suffer condemnation from the public, the authorities and paranoia within ourselves because for 13 years we were made to feel responsible for the draconian, unresponsive, and negative indirect reaction of the tax authorities.

I was an exporter at that time, trading before 1993 and still trading today. I wasn't running away with anyone's money, certainly not the public's. I was purchasing product in the UK and exporting it to the rest of the world, so every month I was in a negative scenario waiting for a repayment from the tax authorities. Given that scenario, who did the tax authorities approach when they had laws like "should have known" and "joint and several liability"? Guilty or not they attacked the exporter. Of course they did. He is the only guy in the supply chain who wasn't running away. The exporter had a real business, employing professional people but more importantly to the tax authorities, he had money in the bank that they knew they could ultimately get their hands on by utilizing their unfairly implemented and created legislation.

Did they care that the parallel markets produced so much revenue in tax worldwide, employed so many people within this sector, housed some of the most creative entrepreneurs that society has to offer, and as we all well know is a dynamic and amazingly productive professional business? No, they didn't care!

The tax authorities didn't believe that the business was a real business, regardless of the fact that today the figures speak for themselves. In 2016, 1.6 billion smartphones were sold globally and 30% of those smartphones went through the parallel trade. That's us guys, that's over 500 million smartphones that we handle, year in, year out.

At this point I will tell you that I don't want to be called a "grey trader." I want to be known as a 'parallel trader" or a re-seller. The term "grey trader" was created and promoted by the vendors and the non-understanding authorities. The wording intimates that something is not quite right. It sits between white and black, "the black market" being completely illegal and "the white market" being absolutely correct in the vendors' self-declaration. It creates an element of doubt in the consumer's subconscious as to the authenticity of the product they are receiving. Not only that, it creates an element of distrust in an industry that is handling a third of the worlds smartphones.

So guys we, are Parallel Traders In Technology. We are re-sellers, and our business runs parallel to the officially appointed distribution channels. I'm proud of what I do and have done in the past. If your not, then you should be.

Why did the fraud go on for 13 years? I have my own theory, but it's only a theory!

VAT, IVA, DPH, TVA or whatever other titles your country has decided upon, is a value added tax system that was created by the European Union to harmonize taxation within Europe.

I don't think there exists much harmony when each country implements their own tariffs and pays back to the EU varying amounts based on independent GDP (Gross Domestic Product). However for the future harmonization of Europe, this was the reason it was created under the EU Sixth VAT Directive.

So, you see what each country puts into the EU through tax, and what each country gets paid back to them by the EU in subsidies, is a very different value. It's like a spiderweb of figures. These figures are obviously worked out on an intricate scale of GDP received per country.

Unfortunately I am not an economist, neither am I a brain surgeon. I am a farmer who likes to make a deal or two. Maybe it is possible that a country may be losing on paper 6 billion GBP in one year, but in reality and after some intervention of clever accountancy that they may not be engaged in such a loss scenario.

If you're not already aware of the word "austerity", then you should be. Each of our countries owes a lot of money, to whom or what I am not absolutely sure but we are all told every week by our governments through the media that we do. Of course, being an upstanding citizen of the world, I believe everything I am told by our governments through the media.

If the figures on export in one country are maintained at a very high level then this contributes to that country's GDP, and if at the same time the losses on those exports are not accountable to that country in totality or on paper, then that country will actually maintain a hypothetical profit scenario, if not in monetary value, then in GDP. More importantly, that country will retain its all-important Triple-A star credit rating carried out every year by companies like Standard and Poor's, enabling cheap borrowing supplied to it by the World Bank and the IMF. Who funds them and why have they got so much loot is a question I would love to know the answer to.

Do you see where I am going with this? In 2006, when the VAT fraud ended in the UK, exports fell by 6%-8%. Then in 2007-8 we had the beginning of the global financial recession.

Maybe I'm just a conspiracy theorist or maybe I am not. I think I should just be content to do my day job and leave the politics to the trustworthy politicians, I mean after all they wouldn't pull a stunt like that, would they?

If you are like me and you were trading before 1993 and still trading today then doesn't that just prove how real the business is? A saturation point of mobile phone distribution was predicted to happen in 2016, it exceeded 1.6 billion smartphones sold worldwide and it didn't even hit saturation then, so there is plenty of business out there.

Of course you would, of course you could, of course you should!

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CRYPTOCURRENCY:

GETTING HIT AND POPPING UP AGAIN

The development of cryptocurrency is beginning to resemble the arcade game called Whack-A-Mole. For those not familiar, it involves a machine consisting of cabinet with five holes in its top and a mallet. Each hole contains a single plastic mole and the machinery necessary to move it up and down. During play, the moles will begin to pop up from their holes at random. Each time one is successfully hit (or "whacked"), another one appears from another hole. The game's name has become English shorthand for describing a difficult problem to solve due to numerous issues appearing when one issue is thought to be resolved.

Why make this comparison? Let's start with the whack. The Chinese government has recently come down hard on cryptocurrency operations, endeavoring to block all trading and mining operations within its borders, the South China Morning Post reports. Technode, meanwhile, reports there is some confusion as to what a crackdown means, whether that's shutting down cryptocurrency exchanges or simply introducing stricter regulatory measures. Confusion aside, the message is that the jig is up – the government is coming for you in the name of eliminating the risk of fraud. This is not an invalid concern, as the values of cryptocurrencies are based on speculative price increases, which opens up the way to fraud. However, the Chinese government, like all governments, doesn't like what they can't control.

To "mine" a bitcoin is not a physical operation, but an electronic one. Warehouses full of computers exist, through which "miners" solve complex mathematical equations to mine (or create) an amount of the digital currency. Lots of these currencies exist, Bitcoin being chief among them, but there is also Ethereum and Dogecoin, among many others (and there will be more – former NBA star Dennis Rodman even started his own cryptocurrency!). Mining operations require lots of resources in the form of electric energy (preferably hydroelectric) and the ability to cool the computers so they don't overheat.

If China cracks down, where can cryptocurrency mining operations relocate that would have all of their necessities? The answer, for the moment, seems to be Iceland. The mole pops up yet again.

Iceland is a strange, beautiful, and powerful country in the north Atlantic that, while not as icy as their name suggests, is considerably cool year-round and this helps keep mining computers cool without excessive air conditioning. It is powerful in the sheer amount of extreme nature that exists there: volcanoes, glaciers, and rivers combine to provide a furious source of hydroelectric energy to keep operations going. YouTube channel Beme News recently filmed a report from one such Icelandic site, and the ingenuity and perseverance of cryptocurrency operators is something to marvel at.

What's more, Iceland isn't just a place for foreign operations to do cryptobusiness. At least one enterprising Icelandic programmer, Baldur Friggjar Odinsson, started up his own cryptocurrency, the Auroracoin. The country was hit hard by the global recession a decade ago, and to this day it is still in recovery mode. To help recover, the Icelandic government imposed strict capital controls that still limit free international trade and investment. According to Vice Magazine's Motherboard blog, Odinsson believes that this is a piece of the puzzle that will help Auroracoin be successful. Furthermore, he is committed to developing infrastructure and merchant acceptance of the cryptocurrency as opposed to speculative price increase, and wishes pass around a (virtual, we presume) handful of Auroracoins every Icelander.

Sounds good, right? Watch out, because the hammer is looming. The Washington Post reports that the total energy used in mining operations may rival the entire population's consumption of energy. Johann Snorri Sigurbergsson, a spokesman for Icelandic energy producer HS Orka, worries that as more mining operations move in, there may not be energy enough for them all to coexist. That's a scary proposition.

The hammer may yet come down, but if and when it does, surely these clever cryptocurrency entrepreneurs will find another resourceful location to thrive in.

CYBER INSURANCE:

A RE-THINKING

Worldwide cyber-insurance coverage is uneven, but recent events have forced us to discover where and what kind of coverage is needed.

Cyber-attacks are a destructive issues that simply will not go away. If anything, they will get more numerous and sophisticated as time goes on. Businesses need not be global firms or bring in billions of dollars in revenue; by merely having an online presence, businesses at any level expose themselves to the risk of being hacked. Security breaches do $400 billion in damage every single year. The wide reach of 2017's WannaCry worm attack, in which business and consumer user data alike was held for ransom on affected machine, seems likely to inspire further evolution of the industry and enlarge coverage.

And of course, free enterprise has risen to meet the challenges posed by hackers. In the wake of hack attacks like those mentioned in our companion article, companies of all stripes are buying up insurance policies left and right. The functions of cyber-insurance (much like technology itself) have shifted over time to meet the needs of policyholders, and are designed to cover not just damage from hacking, but also denial of service attacks and damage wrought by viruses. Types that are currently offered include hacksurance (against cyber attacks and hacking attacks), theft and fraud (covers destruction, theft, transfer of funds, or loss of data as the result of a fraudulent cyber event), business interruption (covers lost income and related costs where a policyholder is unable to conduct business due to a cyber event or data loss), and even reputation insurance against reputation attacks and cyber defamation.

Cyber-insurance is big business, first starting out as a niche market bus exploding in the beginning of the 21st century. Most of it is driven by the North American market, where it is a $1.5 billion industry per research from Aon. One factor driving this growth is the passing of data breach legislation, which keeps companies honest by making them inform customers and shareholders of attacks they have been subjected to. Sunshine is the biggest disinfectant, so the revelation of embarrassment will lead to the prevention of further embarrassment at any price. Moreover, coverage offering seems no longer the stronghold of large insurance companies; Apple and Cisco recently announced a partnership with German firm Allianz to provide cyber-insurance to those who use their equipment.

Indeed, European companies are in on the cyber-insurance game, but in Europe that industry is less than a tenth that of North America, Aon also expects that cyber-insurance coverage will expand thanks to the EU's own data breach legislation, the Global Data Protection Regulation (slated to go into force May 2018). Breach exposures are also more commonly announced from North American companies than from European ones, but it is now expected that this gap will close.

In the rest of the world, though, coverage is severely lacking. Following the WannaCry outbreak, The Business Times of Singapore, where they estimate that 43% of firms are affected by cyber-attacks, reported there is greater awareness of the need for cyber-insurance, and the Financial Times cited an 87% uptick in requests from Asian firms for coverage. However, that it has not translated to purchasing of coverage. The Asian continent is home to some of the biggest

business hubs, and this is simply unacceptable. Business could boom in this segment if legislation similar to that found in Europe and North America was enacted. Hopefully, the harsh awakening of WannaCry will spurn development on this front.

Questions are also being raised as to how whether the current areas of cyber-coverage are enough, and how much deeper it should go. A white paper from KPMG reveals the thin line between intangible and intangible losses – for example, hacking into a home or business security system, the likes of which are already heavily networked, could enable a break-in and robbery. Sabotage can even be an effect of a hack attack, as evidenced by the idea that a digital thermostat could be breached and tuned to a temperature that has damaging effects on warehouse stocks (and of course, the mobile trading industry would be especially vulnerable to such an event). What's more, Aon hints that hack attacks can even inflict bodily harm, recounting an incident whereby a teenager in the Polish city of Lodz rewired a television remote control to interact with an electronic tram track switch, causing a tram to derail.

Obviously, the world is being forced to reconsider what constitutes a cyber-attack, as well as whether to take it more seriously. However, if you, the trader, judge the cyber-security of your dealings to be lacking, or even if you don't know what your situation is, you owe it to yourself and your business to consult one of the many firms in existence, like AIG, Aon, Allianz, or others, to shore up your coverage. Even if you are fairly confident of your business's security, it is worth taking time to reconsider whether your ship is as tight as it could be. Cyber-insurance is not the only component of a solid cyber-risk management strategy, but now more than ever, it is a vital asset.

NOKIA

ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL?

It's late February 2018. The buzz is palpable around the imminent unveiling of a brand new Nokia device. Reasons for this stem from a series of low-key releases of Nokia-branded (and single number-monikered) smartphones in the preceding year. Talk is swirling about the possibility of the next device – perhaps called the Nokia 9 or the Nokia 10, both are in the pipeline – sporting a five-camera setup. A release announcement is yet to be delivered, but the word on the street is that one could come at the impending 2018 Mobile World Congress. It might seem an optimistic guess, but the MWC website reveals that HMD Global – the company responsible for reviving the Nokia moniker – is currently slated to have space reserved at the event, making an announcement seem all the more probable.

Nokia may have fallen far behind the giants of the smartphone industry – it is seldom, if ever, mentioned in the same breath as Apple, Samsung, Huawei or Xiaomi. The pride of Finland came from humble beginnings: it started out in the 19th century as a couple of rubber mills that would churn out rain boots. Its entry into consumer electronics would come when it merged with Finnish Cable Works, and from there it offered the world a plethora of innovations: the first car-phone, the first phone service with international roaming, and most important of all, the world's first handheld mobile device. Even further, Nokia was also the co-founder of the WAP standard, which let pre-3G mobile phones access a rudimentary version of the internet.

Nokia's innovations would prove to be their downfall as other manufacturers learned how to do what they do, but better. When Apple learned how to create phones that access the actual internet, and other competitors like Samsung rose to challenge them, Nokia's existence was on the clock. The company was too slow to react to the new world of smartphones; it could have rallied around the emerging Android technology for smart devices but did not, and hemorrhaged money and personnel as a result. Microsoft would buy off the handset department in 2013 as Nokia refocused on network solutions, particularly in the area of developing "smart city" technologies. Although Microsoft would still tout the Nokia brand name for the Lumia line that the Finnish brand had originally conceived of, the original mobile phone innovator was dead.

It seemed a sad end for a company who produced phones such as the Nokia 8110 and the 3310. For many of us coming of age in the late 1990s or early 2000s, they were our first mobile phones of any kind. They were simple devices, but they provided more than what we typically asked for of a phone, creating the new norm of communication via SMS. They were packaged with the game Snake, the ultimate turn-of-the-millennium timewaster. They provided a kind of monocultur-

al experience through technology in an era before the iPhones and Galaxies came to dominate.

The story of Nokia's revival begins at the end of 2015, when the aforementioned HMD Global was incorporated, establishing its offices opposite Nokia's world headquarters in Espoo, Finland. Having bought the rights to the Nokia name from Microsoft soon thereafter, the new firm quickly set about manufacturing new devices and restoring the legacy of the globally trusted brand. Making trial runs at capturing some of the smart device market back, HMD released a series of Nokia-branded medium- and high-end devices throughout the world in 2017, with many of them targeting Indian and Chinese markets. Their desire to prove that they are with the times is evident, as devices come equipped with the Android Nougat operating system, 13MP Zeiss lenses on both sides (!), and sleek form factors.

So what can we expect from a high-end Nokia mobile phone in the year 2018? This question was not answered at MWC. What was all the hubbub about? It turns out that Nokia swerved us all – its big unveiling was the reboot of the 8810, the original flip-phone. This time around, it has LTE capability, Google Assistant, and is Twitter- and Facebook-ready (And it has, in addition to a sub-$100 price tag, the return of Snake). It's a blast from the past in more ways than one, however: it boasts just one camera (rear-facing) at a paltry 2 MP, a keypad instead of a keyboard, and its memory is not expandable via a micro- or nano-SD card. The phone is also not very fast in terms of processing power, but that's to be expected given this specific form factor. It's a real test to see if your Nokia memories stack up to the reliving the experience.

There's still no sign of the Nokia 10 yet, which is what the release of all of their recent devices seems to be leading up to. It could be that they are perfecting what will surely become their flagship device, but the release of the revamped 8110, as nice as it is to see an old friend again, seems somewhat of a misstep. It's unclear who is asking for such a device in the year 2018, but the release is a half-measure that leaves people asking whether or not Nokia really has anything left in the tank at all.

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STAY SAFE OUT THERE:

INFO SECURITY EDITION

Information security firm CSO recently released an article detailing the biggest breaches of cyber-security of the 21st century. The list is one cautionary tale after another of how unprotected the online resources are, even as millions of people trust them every day. It's a stomach-churning read, especially as you realize that your information has likely been accessed in one of these cases. Breaches happen every single year in industries from retail to communication, and even governments are constantly at risk of being hacked. Most relevant to tech trading are attacks on payment systems, which can disrupt the supply chain, the flow of business, and the bottom line.

One entry on that list hits especially close to home. In late 2006, TJX Companies, the parent of many retail chains worldwide, suffered a globe-spanning computer breach in which consumer credit and debit card information was exposed, and all involved companies, banks and insurers lost in excess of USD $200 million. The cause is thought to have come from either a weakly-encrypted data system or an active attack on a retail-outlet based job

encryption system. Whichever way you slice it, these are two ways in which sensitive can be exposed and work to the detriment of traders and wholesalers alike.

Anybody can be vulnerable, really. Even if you do not deal extensively in transferring sensitive personal information, hacks can happen to those who do not have their wits about them. Business email compromises (BECs) are all too common, and if timed just so, this can spell disaster. Say you're in the middle of a transaction, having just sent your proforma invoice out. Hackers can access your inbox, and that of your customer, sending emails posing as you, claiming that your bank account information have been "updated," and requesting a re-transfer of funds. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been lost this way. Don't fall prey to a BEC.

How can you protect yourself? For starters, take advantage of the security measures that email platforms provide. For years, GMail has offered two-step verification that requires using your phone to verify your login (other services offer this feature as well – check twofactorauth.org for details on every one). It has proven to be an indispensible tool in the fight against BECs,

	MALWARE	BEC
IP Matches Victim	✓	✓
Device Print Matches Victim	✓	✓
Behavioral Match	✗	✓
Ability to Bypass Dual-Custody	✓	✓
Ability to Delay Detection/Recall	✓	✓

as you can also learn anytime someone tries to access your inbox from anywhere in the world. For those who run transactions on a larger scale, it helps to educate yourself about the best encryption standards available, as well as institute best practices for controlling personnel access to data, employing firewalls and VPNs, and vigilantly updating the latest security patches for vital software such as operating systems.

In the trading business, there is an obligation to honor a trading partner by being honest at all levels and not cheating them. By all means, the same attitude should apply in case of information security violations. After all, one would not want to end up like Uber, the much-used ridesharing app who was also a breach victim in 2016. Hackers accessed the personal information of 57 million users and 600,000 drivers, Not only did Uber not reveal the breach to the public until a year after it happened, but the company actively tried to cover it up by paying the hackers to erase all trace of a cyberattack on their systems. By the end of the fiasco, Uber had lost around 30% of its value. Do you want this to be you? If no, then be honest.

Security breaches and business email compromises can lead to so much damage in terms of not only revenue, but company value and customer trust. It pays to be mindful of cybersecurity dangers, to be smart about knowing where, when, and how to patch up weaknesses, and to take small actions in the short run that will save your business in the long run.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EAST

TIMES ARE GETTING TIGHT IN CHINA WHILE XIAOMI'S SUCCESS SOARS IN INDIA

If there's one thing that you, the loyal Handelot Times reader, have picked up on in our first year of publishing, it's the fact that we are deeply interested in the Chinese and Indian smartphone markets. They have proven to be dynamic and ever-changing markets, with the emergence of Xiaomi and its propensity for giving smartphone giants headaches, and its unpredictability makes it all the more entertaining to watch. Now, more than ever, it's a tale of two cities (or in this case, countries) in terms of the smartphone shipping landscape.

Tech analysis firm Canalys report that the Chinese market has reached saturation as the first ever annual decline in shipments was recorded there. After years of growth, shipments fell 4% from Q4 2016 to Q4 2017. Not only have most manufacturers suffered a decline in their shipments but the vendor scene is also stratifying: Larger vendors such as Nova and Honor have gotten a bigger share of the shipments, while smaller ones such as Gionee and Meizu risk getting squeezed out altogether. The only two manufacturers whose fortunes did not swoon over this span were Apple, who reclaimed third place from Xiaomi in shipping, and Huawei, who – being helped by the growth of their vending partner Honor – saw a 9% uptick in their shipping.

The news from Xiaomi may seem disheartening to fans of the young juggernaut (and those wishing on the demise of the Apple empire). However, it's not all bad: Forbes has issued a report revealing that Xiaomi has achieved RMB 100 million in revenue in eight years of existence – a feat that took Apple twenty years to accomplish. Now, China and India share a long border, and it is evident that fortunes in the shipping game are as different as night and day on either side. Where Xiaomi's growth may be stagnating in their home market, it is absolutely soaring in India, their biggest foreign market. Forbes also reports that they have overtaken Samsung to become the best-selling smartphone manufacturer in the country. This shift is owed to two things: the fact that Samsung has been caught repackaging older models and selling them as new, and Xiaomi's aggressive expansion plan that has included opening large-format retail stores, pop-up shops at established electronics retailers, and a deep-dive into mass advertising like they've never attempted before. Most of all, India's market

China's smartphone growth stalls as shipments fall 4%

Source: Canalys estimates, Smartphone Analysis, January 2018

canalys

is not on the verge of saturation. In fact, sales of smartphones are expected to double by the year 2020.

There are two things to take away, here. One is the idea that Samsung is getting too cocky. They may be a globe-spanning stalwart. They may, as Canalys's Rushabh Doshi assures, have a stranglehold on the supply chain and a determined research and development staff to boot. But they will continue to lose ground if they don't care about defrauding the very people that buy their products in the first place. They've already alarmed and enraged local technology media and the word is spreading on social media, so Samsung needs to fix this now. They simply cannot afford to be negligent in protecting their share of the market against a formidable challenger like Xiaomi.

The second is that entrepreneurs in the shipping business may be wondering how to do business in China in such a tight market. It's not that Chinese consumers have ceased buying devices, or that they will at any point in the future. Rather, it's more important to view China, on the whole, as a producer of these devices rather than a consumer. Much has been made of Xiaomi. Huawei isn't going anywhere. Oppo and Vivo produce clever and powerful little devices that provide value. And these are not the only ones. There are markets for all of these manufacturers, and the strategy in light of this news may be to go where the phones are. We're already seeing how Chinese tech can subvert the established order. It is the shippers who can help shape that.

MARCH

	Switch	PC	PS4	PSVR	3DS	Xbox	Vita	
Bravo Team				●				6
Final Fantasy XV: Royal Edition		●	●			●	●	6
Frantics			●					6
Scribblenauts Showdown	●		●			●		6
Fear Effect Sedna		●	●			●		6
Devil May Cry HD Collection		●	●			●		13
Golem				●				13
Pure Farming 2018		●	●			●		13
Kirby Star Allies	●							16
Assassin's Creed Rogue: Remastered			●			●		20
Attack on Titan 2	●	●	●			●		20
Sea of Thieves		●				●		20
Titan Quest			●			●		20
A Way Out		●	●			●		23
Detective Pikachu					●			23
Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom		●	●					23
Atelier Lydie & Suelle: The Alchemists and the Mysterious Paintings	●	●	●					27
Far Cry 5		●	●			●		27
MLB The Show 18			●					27
Agony		●	●			●		30

APRIL

	Switch	PC	PS4	PSVR	3DS	Xbox	Vita	
Pillars of Eternity II: Deadfire		●						3
Extinction		●	●			●		10
Yakuza 6: The Song of Life			●					17
Total War Saga: Thrones of Britannia		●						19
God of War			●					20
Nintendo Labo Variety Kit	●							20
Nintendo Labo Robot Kit	●							20
Adventure Time: Pirtes of the Enchiridion	●	●	●			●		24

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CORPORATE NEWS

One of the biggest surprises out of this year's Consumer Electronics Show was not the introduction of a new product, but a power outage that lasted an hour and fifteen minutes on day two of the event. The cause was attributed to the fact that a transformer came into contact from rainfall-induced condensation. Once over, a good laugh was had by all, especially by Alyssa Bereznak at The Ringer.

Via GSMArena, Korean publication The Bell says that Samsung aims to ship 43 million units this year of the Galaxy S9 and S9+, which is two million more than last year, based off indications that it has given to its component suppliers. This year's figure is still lower than 2016's shipment of 48 million units.

More and more manufacturers are employing the bezelless, notch-sporting design of Apple's iPhone X. The new Asus Zenfone Max 5 employs it. Oppo's R15 also tried it on, and now seems to be doubling-down on the design with its new F7, the so-called "Selfie Expert."

Copying aesthetics may move product in some parts of the world, but in the United States, it's more about substance than style. Android users there are more likely to stay loyal and buy more devices with the OS as opposed to iPhone, a study by CIRP reports.

Microsoft is doing what it can to make inroads on both of those operating systems: word is that it is internally testing its Cortana assistant on beta versions of the Outlook app for Android and iOS, per a report from GSMArena.

Xiaomi CEO Lei Jun has said that it will enter the US market in either late 2018 or in 2019. To avoid the US government blockage that befell Huawei when it tried to make a deal with AT&T, Xiaomi may only sell unlocked phones at retailers.

Don't feel bad for Huawei, however: their Honor View 10, having been pushed back from January, is going on sale Stateside this month for $499.

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