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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology
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Homework: Summing Up the Decade

Yes, I know, the decade formally ends at the end of 2010, because the first year was 1, not 0. But everyone else is going to eagerly celebrate the end of the "Decade from Hell," as TIME Magazine called it, in a few days. So think back about the years 2000-2009, and send me your short summary of "The Decade in IT" (just headlines, not a lot of text), including the good, the bad and the ugly, and I'll make a special issue of the KIT with the best quotes.

8 Reasons Why Google Wave May (or May Not) Kill E-Mail

This is the title of an article Claude Baudoin wrote for the "Digital Landfill" blog, based on his observations from tests conducted in the last two months with some of the readers of the KIT.

Outtakes from the OMG Meeting

If you want to see a glimpse of what happens at an OMG (Object Management Group Meeting), look no further than to this slightly irreverent YouTube video made during last week's meeting in Long Beach, Calif.
The first 3 people who correctly identify and email the three tunes used for the soundtrack will be named in the next newsletter.

SC09 Conference Proceedings

The 22nd Annual Conference for High Performance Computing, more simply nicknamed SC09, took place in Portland, Ore., on November 16-20. The proceedings are available to all here.

You Say You Want a Revolution...

Pranav Mistry, a researcher at the MIT Media Lab, describes his revolutionary "Sixth Sense" user interface inventions during a TEDIndia talk. Some of the demos are amazing -- they will make you realize how accustomed we are to the keyboard-mouse-screen user interface, and how much better our interactions with information will become when we liberate ourselves from the limitations of this model.

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Will We Run Out of Prefixes Soon?

Intel is planning to invest several million euros in an " exascale research center" within Intel Labs Europe, in collaboration with three French research institutes. Repeat after me: kilo, mega, giga, tera, peta, exa. So we're talking about 10^18 floating operations per second (FLOPS). After that we still have zetta and yotta in reserve, so our world isn't yet coming to an end.

Tower of Babel, or Justified Evolution?

Computer science is 60+ years old, Fortran is 50+, yet computer languages continue to be invented. Is it just a way for academics to publish more research? In fact, the ever-increasing complexity of problems we want to solve seems to justify this evolution. As each stage in the evolution of computing yields larger and more complex software, we periodically need to add another layer of abstraction in order for programming to remain within a human's grasp. Two recent examples are:

- the increasing popularity of the R language for high-end statistical analysis
- Go, the new systems programming language from Google launched last month, "optimized for applications designed for massive scalability and multi-processor systems."

Cyberspace Leaders

I started (belatedly, since a colleague had alerted me to his posts almost a year ago) to follow James Gardner (blog, Twitter), the CIO of Lloyds TSB. He refreshingly speaks his mind on topics that interest many of us, including the value vs. cost of analyst firm subscriptions, the divide between mobile knowledge workers and office-bound task workers, why salespeople who don't do their homework make him mad, and much more.

Seen Recently...

"Software-as-a-Service is the Access/Excel for the 2010s."
-- Todd Biske (Monsanto) in an SOA Consortium conference call, meaning that SaaS will allow business people to bypass IT in order to deploy quick solutions to their needs, unwittingly creating subsequent support nightmares.

"Project Management should not be about bureaucratic, never-ending processes; instead, keep it simple, use what works for you and try to improve it."
-- Jose Paez, via Twitter