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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology

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→ In Memoriam: Ken Olsen (1926-2011)

Ken Olsen, who founded Digital Equipment Corp. in 1957 and made it into the no. 2 computer manufacturer in the 1980s, with the success of the PDP and VAX lines of minicomputers, died on February 6. Mike Rosen of Cutter Consortium wrote this [thoughtful obituary](#), and the [Wikipedia article about Olsen](#) contains some additional details about his life and contributions to the industry.

→ Reader Comments on Build vs. Buy

The Cutter Consortium's blog recently excerpted some comments on "build vs. buy" that were part of an Executive Update entitled "If You Build It, They May Not Come" by Claude Baudoin. Doug Hadden, VP Products at FreeBalance, sent the following (edited for brevity):

"The build vs. buy debate is often fueled by the inadequacy of 'classic' software to adapt to business processes. Customers using these COTS applications are often forced to change to generic processes [under] the guise that these are 'best practices.' Using standard practices means that you lose competitive advantage. Organizations are often faced with massive customization and huge maintenance costs with COTS enterprise software. So the TCO of COTS vs. build is often a calculation about which is the worse evil. Specialized vertical providers often have the level of flexibility (without code customization) needed to adapt to business processes and competitive advantages. The cost burden of integration is slowly disappearing thanks to Web Services and component-based SOA. And, these can often be more easily extended by the customer to achieve all the advantages of build and buy with fewer of the disadvantages. There can be a misleading impression to technology buyers that they must select one of the large consolidating ERP vendors. As if business was a game and you need to pick a winner rather than what is best for you."

→ Ten Articles on Content Management

"Digital Landfill," the site famous for its "8 Things to Know About..." series, just published a [compilation](#) of 10 (not 8!) articles on content management. The list covers record management, Sharepoint 2010 migration, data capture, etc., with titles such as:

- Migrating to Sharepoint 2010: Home Makeover
- Getting to Know Your Users
- Can We Automate Retention?
- Disposing of Electronic Records
- Stealing Your Content for Fame and Fortune



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→ A New Application of Optimization

There are 1700 automated Velib bicycle rental stations in Paris, yet it is frustrating when you want to rent and the closest station is empty, or you are returning and the station is full. The logistics of moving bikes around from full stations to empty ones is complex. Tel Aviv University (TAU) researchers have [developed a model](#) to predict and plan the necessary moves.

→ Peer-to-Peer Mobile Communication

Flinders University has designed a [system to relay cell phone traffic](#) from phone to phone, so that phones outside the range of a cell tower can connect. One proposed application is for disaster areas. Peer-to-peer cellular traffic is not a new idea. Rice University did research on this ten years ago. Creating a system compatible with existing phones (and donating the technology to the public) is good, but what about the relaying phones' increased power consumption? Surprisingly, only one reader of the Flinders Web article mentioned this issue. Yet in a disaster area where the electricity grid may be down, this calls into question the viability of such a scheme.

→ Seen Recently...

"The inherently democratic nature of social media tools is the very reason why they are being restricted or marginalised in some organisations."

-- An unnamed senior government official,
quoted in [Euan Semple's blog](#) on social media