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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology

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In This Issue

[Process and Collaboration at Dimagi](#)

[Update on Luminoso](#)

[Cybersecurity and Smart Meters](#)

[Coursera](#)

[Seen Recently](#)

 CB photo



[Consulting Services](#)

- IT Strategy
- EA / SOA / BPM
- IT Innovation Briefings
- IT Due Diligence
- Vendor Selection
- Executive IT Seminars
- Cloud Computing
- Grid Computing
- Security Maturity
- Knowledge Strategy
- Technical Communities
- Knowledge Capture
- Enterprise Social Networking

→ Process and Collaboration: Dimagi Gets It

During a recent informal interview, the VP Operations & Strategy of Dimagi Inc., Carter Powers, explained how he implemented process and collaboration excellence.

Dimagi, founded in 2002, produces a mobile software platform to support community healthcare workers in developing countries. The Cambridge, Mass.-based company employs fewer than 30 people, and has teams in the countries where they operate to develop localized applications.

For such a small and idealistic company, the robustness and rigor of the business processes put in place by Mr. Powers are impressive:

- All documents are shared using Dropbox. If someone is in the field with no Internet connection, they may queue an e-mail with an attachment, but this is a frowned-upon exception.
- Live communication is via Skype
- Knowledge is captured using Confluence wikis
- Project management and issue tracking use Fogbugz from Fog Creek Software.

→ Text Analysis without a Taxonomy

Luminoso, mentioned in The Kit's Issue 33 in October 2010, continues to develop and market its text analysis capability based on a concept network rather than a formalized taxonomy of the domain.

A recent conversation gave an insight into potential applications:

- In a so-called "B2B2C" use case, Luminoso (the first B) sells to a business (the second B) a way to analyze text written by their customers (C) to infer their product preferences.
- Analyzing Twitter traffic can lead to the identification of unexpected concepts that start appearing in a certain context: "skittles" comes up in discussions of the shooting of Trayvon Martin, "Etch-a-Sketch" in the Republican primary campaign.
- A potentially key (and lucrative) application is e-discovery: analyzing the millions of e-mails subpoenaed during a lawsuit can reveal unexpected connections and evidence -- finding what you were *not* searching for.

Beside the technology, the business model is interesting: in one mode, Luminoso charges by the "megatweet" analyzed, essentially marking up the price that Twitter charges for the raw data feed.

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→ Cybersecurity and Smart Meters

The risks associated with the security of electronic sensors and actuators are real, but the current renewed buzz on cybersecurity is not scalpel-like in its precision. Take this blog post by Brian Krebs on [hacking smart meters](#) in Puerto Rico. In fact, the theft of electricity required physical access to the meters; the thieves modified their settings to under-record usage, but not over the Internet.

This being said, we're definitely going to need all communication with smart devices, whether it is over infrared or IP, to be protected through better authentication of not just the human user, but also of the device itself.

→ Coursera

Coursera, which calls itself a "social entrepreneurship company," was founded by two Stanford professors and is funded by a couple of high-power venture capitalists. It offers *free* online courses from Penn, Princeton, Stanford and UMich. There are currently [40 courses](#) in the [catalog](#), including Computer Science, Biology, History, the Arts, and more. Do you still wish you had taken CS101 in college? Well, now you can, from Stanford Prof. Nick Parlante.

Note: the last two items above were discovered in the [May issue](#) of Vince Polley's MIRNL (Miscellaneous IT-Related Legal News).

→ Seen Recently...

"If we do not know who the customer is, we do not know what quality is."

-- Mike Kavis, [@madgreek65](#)