SHARE:

The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology
Issue No. 78 - 15 August 2012

Was this forwarded to you?

join our mailing list

In This Issue

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

Contact Us:

Cloud Computing: Growing Up Fast

This is the title of the August Executive Update from Claude Baudoin in Cutter's "Business & Enterprise Architecture" resource center. The Update argues that cloud computing is moving faster than other new technologies through the adoption lifecycle, in part because it is not a genuinely new concept, in part because there has been much early rational discussion of the advantages and the risks, and in part because of the work done by several organizations on standardization of cloud management interfaces. End-user involvement, especially through the Cloud Standards Customer Council, is contributing to the quality of the debate and to the collection of case study materials. The four=page paper ends with a list of the next steps we should focus on.

For a PDF copy of the report (if your company is not a Cutter client), please contact us.

Outlook.com: "Me Too" or Gmail Killer?

Microsoft's announcement of a new web-based hosted mail service, outlook.com, got the technosphere abuzz with speculation. Too many otherwise serious analysts are jumping to the conclusion that this is a "Gmail killer." While the power of Microsoft to shift the market should not be understimated, there are some points to consider:

- It's not as if this was a totally new service from Microsoft; basically, this is a replacement/upgrade for Hotmail.
- If other Microsoft products serve as examples (SharePoint, anyone?), then it will take several releases for the company to really make the product perform as expected.
- Meanwhile, Google will not sit on its hands. While its evolution of Gmail over the last years has been very conservative, you can trust they are now poring over the announced Outlook.com features to decide how to compete with them.
- Google web applications are known for their simple, intuitive interfaces. Microsoft applications... 'nuf said.
- Outlook.com is supposed to intelligently file your mail in folders for you. Let's hope it works really well, because if it doesn't, there will be a lot of unhappy users wasting time looking through many folders to find things they don't know had been filed there.

In short, we have some irrational exuberance on one side, as well as probably some blind Microsoft bashing on the other side (to which the above points may be a bit too close). If nothing else, this news will cause *all* webmail providers to improve their game, and that's good.

Argonne Gets the Bronze

There hadn't been much news recently about the constant race for supercomputing performance. But the new third place in the TOPS500 rankings was obtained last June by Mira, an IBM BlueGene/Q system at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois. Its 768,000 cores on 48 racks yielded a Linpack benchmark performance of 8.1 petaflops. Lest anyone rest on their laurels too easily, the next TOPS500 rating announcement is already scheduled for November of this year.

Visualizing Data: Where Art Meets Numbers

The topics of business intelligence and "big data" have been trending up over the past year. Presenting large data sets in understandable ways is part of the issue. Many people know the remarkable work of Edward Tufte, whose 1983 book "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information" is revered by data analysts, and who at 70 still tours the U.S. giving one-day lectures on "Presenting Data and Information."
Prof. Tufte (he taught at Princeton and Yale) inspired many followers. We recently came across David McCandless' 2009 book "The Visual Miscellaneum -- A Colorful Guide to the World's Most Consequential trivia." The author describes it as "a series of experiments in making information approachable and beautiful." We think he succeeded.

Seen Recently...

"Social business: we have the tools. Now what?"
"Focusing on social business tools too early can warp your outcomes. Be strategic first!"
                            -- Dion Hinchcliffe (@dhinchcliffe)

"A checklist is not a (strong) governance model."
                            -- Brenda Michelson (@bmichelson)