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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology

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In This Issue

[Privacy Challenges](#)

[Product Life Cycle Support](#)

[ACM Learning Center:
Most Popular Courses](#)

[Webinar on Parallel
Programming Models](#)

[Seen Recently](#)

 CB photo

[Consulting Services](#)

- IT Strategy
- Enterprise Architecture Roadmap
- Business Process Modeling & Analysis
- Enterprise Software Selection
- IT Innovation Briefings
- IT Due Diligence
- Executive IT Seminars
- Cloud Computing
- Security Maturity
- Software Process
- Knowledge Strategy
- Technical Communities
- Knowledge Capture
- Taxonomy development
- Enterprise Social Media

➔ [Big Brother Can Read Your Messages](#)

By now, everyone must be well aware of the US National Security Agency PRISM program and the extensive scanning of messages it entails. Less well-publicized, except in this *Ars Technica* article, is the fact that since Microsoft acquired Skype, it removed some peer-to-peer aspects of the architecture and replaced it with centralized servers that scan the content of the messages for the purpose of detecting signs of fraud.

It has been almost 15 years since Sun Microsystems' then-CEO Scott McNealy said in an interview, "you have zero privacy anyway -- get over it!" Audiences were shocked. That was before social networks dealt the first serious blow to our naiveté, and before PRISM. McNealy was not right about everything (otherwise, Sun would still exist) but on that point, he was definitely... an oracle.

Nonetheless, some academics are working on privacy-enhancing projects. Stanford leads the Cookie Clearinghouse, which will be supported at least by Firefox. The clearinghouse will be a central list of "good" and "bad" cookies -- the good ones help a user retain their preferences across visits to the same site, the bad ones allow targeted advertising or tracking of users' browsing habits. See this [CSO Online article](#) for more.

Meanwhile, the Free University of Berlin and Stevens Institute of Technology are jointly working on [AdLeaks](#), a system designed to allow whistleblowers to send encrypted messages that are mixed with a "noise" of similarly encrypted but meaningless messages. The system is explicitly designed with PRISM and the NSA in mind, given that anonymizing services like [Tor](#) are not completely safe against an agency that can observe all the traffic on a network at once.

➔ [Product Life Cycle Support \(PLCS\)](#)

In the hallways outside the recent meeting of the Manufacturing Technology and Industrial Systems (ManTIS) Task Force, one of the bodies within the Object Management Group (OMG), we heard about the [Jotne Group](#), an Oslo-based company specializing in interoperability solutions for manufacturing companies. In this [clear and concise video](#), the company presents PLCS (Product Life Cycle Support), a metamodel and interchange format that enables users to transfer, integrate, maintain and archive product data across heterogeneous Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) systems. PLCS is maintained by OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Systems) and is part of ISO standard 10303, "standard for the Exchange of Product Model Data," informally called STEP.

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→ ACM Learning Center Update

The Association for Computing Machinery published its periodic list of most popular course in each of 6 areas of specialization:

- [Cloud Computing Basics](#)
- [Managing Files in Linux](#)
- [Control Fundamentals and Security Threats](#)
- [Java Programming with Java 6.0 SE: Getting Started](#)
- [Introducing Agile Software Development](#)
- [JavaScript Language Basics](#)

→ Changing How Programmers Think About Parallel Programming

As another offering from ACM's Skillsoft program, on July 17, William Gropp, Director of the Parallel Computing Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will present a free webcast on the above subject.

Excerpt from the announcement: *"Attendees will get an introduction to parallel execution models, focusing on how programmers think about writing programs. You will learn what an execution model is; the difference between an execution model, programming model, and programming system; how an execution model influences how a programmer thinks about implementing parallelism; and common parallel programming approaches and how they can lead to poor scalability."*

→ Seen Recently...

"In 2013 we are creating more data every 10 minutes than was created in the entirety of human history prior to 2008."

-- Rowan Trollope, from Cisco Systems, [@rowantrollope](#)