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→ Hellabyte

We mentioned in the previous issue the "Internet of Things" event held during the OMG meeting a few weeks ago. Last week's Gartner Symposium in Florida also focused on the revolution brought on by connected devices. [CIO Journal reports](#) that collaboration and social media guru Andrew McAfee said that we are running out of prefixes to denote higher and higher orders of magnitudes of data volumes. After petabytes, exabytes, zettabytes and yottabytes, he suggested "hellabytes" for "a hell of a lot of data." We can probably trust ISO to come up with a more rational naming scheme, but the point remains that handling the data from billions of sensors will be a challenge. Focusing solely on the volume would be a mistake: the security and privacy implications of this traffic will be much harder to solve than the sheer amount of data.

→ UXP: Another TLA?

For once, it seems that Gartner is not to blame for the invention of a new three-letter acronym: it is apparently IDC that introduced "UXP," standing for "User Experience Platform," to mostly replace what we used to call collaboration suites.

So what's a UXP-by-any-name? For many vendors, unfortunately, it means "whatever we were already selling, but let's call it a UXP now." This is mostly true for large companies such as IBM, Microsoft, Oracle or Adobe, who do not want challengers to displace them. In response to a recent client inquiry, we formulated three key aspects of a product that could genuinely claim to reshape the experience of the user:

1. The product must work on mobile platforms because -- wake up, we're in 2013 -- that's where the users increasingly are. So it needs to run on Android, iOS and Windows Mobile, and it needs to accommodate the variable and sometimes limited sizes of the screen, and the variety of input interfaces (touch screens, soft keyboards, and increasingly voice commands).
2. It must support integrated workflows involving collaboration and business applications. For example, it must be intuitive and quick to drag a presentation received as an e-mail attachment into a Web conferencing window, a shared file store in the cloud, or a CRM system.
3. It must preserve the security of corporate data, therefore provide measures to encrypt the data, back it up remotely, and to wipe out a lost or stolen device's local store.

Ideally, a UXP would also be compatible with a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy if an enterprise adopts it, and it would allow the workflows to include access to legacy enterprise applications, not just "standard" collaboration tools like e-mail, calendar, Web browsing, Web conferencing, and file stores.

→ Mile-High Supercomputing

This year's edition of the [Supercomputing conference](#), SC13, takes place in Denver on Nov. 17-22, although the presence of many employees of the US Government still depends on a resolution of the partial shutdown brought on by the current budget impasse. On the positive side, expect travel and hotel bookings to be easier and perhaps even cheaper if the government paralysis continues.

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→ Cryptographic Modules and Medieval Castles

Schlumberger Fellow Bertrand du Castel's keynote talk at the 2013 International Cryptographic Module Conference (ICMC), held in Washington, DC (just in time to avoid the shutdown's impact), was entitled "Do Cryptographic Modules Have a Moat?" You can watch the keynote [here](#).

→ MIT's M-Blocks

The self-configuring modular robots invented at the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) may not have an obvious or immediate application yet, but they represent a new level of inventiveness, because the blocks, while autonomous, can assemble into fairly strong structures connected through magnets. See the [MIT News article](#), which contains a fascinating demo video.

→ Seen Recently...

"The method of 'exploring' ideas through stories is now the preferred mode of, or replacement for, serious thought and argument."

-- Steven Poole, debunking a common style of motivational business books in "[The Pseudo-Profundity of Malcolm Gladwell](#)"
(The New Statesman, 10 October 2013)