The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology

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What Goes Up May Go Down

There are many information technologies that can apply to very different domains, even though some business people tend to say "we are unique, so we need unique solutions," often to justify the NIH (not invented here) syndrome. Case in point: the TruePLM software from Norway's Jotne Group, used for product life cycle management (PLM) by the European Space Agency (ESA) has been reused by Statoil and Oceaneering to manage deepwater oil exploration equipment. The ESA's Technology Transfer office explains the technology transfer in this paper.

Barry Boehm on Software Lifecycles

On December 17 (9:00 PST, noon EST, 17:00 GMT), ACM presents a webcast with renowned software engineering authority Barry Boehm, from the University of Southern California, on "The Incremental Commitment Spiral model (ICSM): Principles and Practices for Successful Systems and Software." This should be very interesting to "agilists" and traditional lifecycle model users alike. Register here for this free event.

LASER 2014

The LASER Summer School on Software Engineering, led by the Chair of Software Engineering at ETH in Zurich, will celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2014. The 11th edition will take place on Sep. 7-13, 2014, as usual on the island of Elba, Italy, with a special program on "Leading Edge Software Engineering."

Cloud vs. NSA

Just a couple years ago, the thought of Microsoft taking steps to fight government oversight would have seemed preposterous. But here's the problem: if you offer cloud services (as Microsoft does with Azure, Office 365, and others) to corporate clients, whom you're trying to convince that their data is secure in the cloud, then you find yourself fighting the National Security Agency. This is why Microsoft is joining Google, Yahoo, Facebook and others in planning efforts to encrypt data against NSA intrusion, as the Washington post reports in this article. The irony is that after the whole issue gets under control, presumably with new restrictions against NSA domestic spying, we'll probably have Edward Snowden to thank for ending up with Better-secured cloud traffic.

In related news, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) has accelerated work to allow a "fully encrypted Web" with version 2.0 of the hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP). The MIT Technology Review reports that work is proceeding "frantically" to release HTTP 2.0 before the end of 2014.

Avoid a Traffic Jam, Get in a Crash?

IBM Research Africa wants to help drivers in Nairobi, Kenya, avoid congested areas thanks to an SMS-based service that receives a car's location and destination, and sends back alerts on traffic jams (read the UPI news item). But is it a good idea to encourage drivers to text while driving, when road conditions are already fairly hazardous to start with? Is this not a violation of some sort of Hippocratic oath ("first, do no harm") of the IT profession?

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Seen Recently...

"The next generation of automation applications will take a more complete view of the drilling process... This will require greater levels of interoperability between applications and processes using newer technology from the IT and oil industry standard organizations. [...] Standards for oil industry information exchange have existed for many years, but they are in many cases inadequate to convey the detail required for automation of complex processes."

-- Drilling Contractor, the official magazine of the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC)