

The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology

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→ Supercomputing Down Under

We don't know if its discs spin in the opposite direction, but the Magnus system at the Pawsey Supercomputing Center (named after an Australian radio astronomer) in Perth, Western Australia, is now capable of over 1 petaFLOPS (10^{15} floating-point operations per second). Not bad, but a Chinese system, the Tianhe 2, achieved over 50 pFLOPS in mid-2013, thus surpassing the US, and it still held its lead a year later. Fujitsu announced in August that it's aiming for 100 pFLOPS, trying to leapfrog from its current No. 4 position in the TOP500 list. Places 2, 3 and 5 in this highly watched ranking belong to US supercomputers located at the Oak Ridge, Lawrence Livermore and Argonne national labs (respectively).

→ News from the OMG Quarterly Meeting

The Object Management Group just held its quarterly Technical Meeting week in Austin, Texas. Here are some points we deemed worth noting.

The Business Architecture Guild held a two-day workshop jointly with the OMG. The goal was to gather feedback to enhance the practices in the "Business Architecture Body of Knowledge" (BizBOK™). Meanwhile, the Business Modeling & Integration Task Force is starting to move toward issuing a Request for Proposals for a "business architecture metamodel" to reconcile the different modeling languages that exist in this space.

The Industrial Internet Consortium (not part of OMG, but it holds its meetings at the same time and its interests intersect the OMG's work on data distribution services and other standards) continues to attract an increasing number of participants at each meeting.

The Cloud Standards Customer Council held a day of discussions about the "post-Infrastructure-as-a-Service" phase of cloud adoption. Some of us don't think that the "post-aaS" term is really appropriate, but there has certainly been increasing activity in the Platform-as-a-Service area, where the provider isn't just letting you rent a bare server, but includes development environments, database management systems, a Web services product, etc.

Also notable was a brief discussion of a project, led by Energistics, to allow software to query multiple glossaries, taxonomies or ontologies in order to enhance information and knowledge retrieval.

The next meeting will be in Long Beach< Calif., the week of Dec. 8-12.

→ Know Thy Enemies: After Heartbleed, Shellshock

The complexity of operating systems and the lack of provability of their code has led to another bad surprise, a vulnerability called Shellshock in a popular Unix and OS X command line interpreter called Bash (an acronym for Bourne Again Shell, which is a pun on the Bourne Shell, released in 1977 and named after its author). Bash is part of the code in most Linux distributions, including the prevalent Red Hat. Fixes are being rolled out, but as usual, this means that securing entire enterprises will once again be dependent on the proper identification of at-risk systems and the priorities and resources given to system administrators, or the degree of automation they have implemented to roll out pervasive updates.

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P2P Cloud: D♠j♠ Vu All Over Again

IEEE Spectrum published a paper by researchers at the University of Bologna in which they envision a "peer-to-peer (P2P) cloud" in which the resources one accesses are not concentrated in a huge data center, but are made up of the network of other users' computers. There's only one problem with this concept: it's been done before, minus the pay-as-you-go charging mechanism -- we just called it *grid computing* then, and it was ten years ago. This was also at the core of systems for sharing music and videos (not always legally), such as the "bit torrent" file distribution protocol.

To their credit, the authors acknowledge the "volunteer computing" P2P projects of some years ago, but this begs the question: what's really so new in your approach? And then they acknowledge that there are huge obstacles in terms of security, trust and fairness in such a system.



Seen Recently...

"I have no idea what anyone is talking about. What is it? It's complete gibberish. It's insane. When is this idiocy going to stop?"

-- Larry Ellison, CEO of Oracle, talking about the cloud in 2009

"Oracle already dominates cloud computing."

-- Larry Ellison, ex-CEO of Oracle, 2014,
paraphrased in a [Fortune.com](#) article