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The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology

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→ Happy New Year!

To our 700 or so readers, happy new year! For those of you in the oil & gas industry, hang in tight -- we all know that it's still going to be a bumpy year. In theory, this would actually be a good time to adopt and apply standards, increase automation through Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) technologies, and move some resources to the cloud in order to lower costs in the long run. But of course, this is also a bad time to suggest new investments in an industry that is undergoing severe cost cutting. We see such investments happening in other areas: the smart electric grid industry is critically dependent on IoT technology and is investing in it. The sharing economy continues to expand rapidly (Uber and Airbnb have gone from curiosities to major irritants to traditional businesses in just a couple of years) and this would not be possible without a lot of IT innovations, including mobile apps and analytics.

Social media can't really get much more embedded into the fabric of today's society than they already were. What's new is the legal wrangling around privacy and data residency, with the "safe harbor" ruling by the European Court of Justice recently attracting attention to the relative lack of personal data protection in the U.S. The use of social media in business is also well accepted, if sometimes controversial, but LinkedIn faces growing pains (the fourth quarter was a public relations disaster with group managers) and Viadeo has made itself essentially irrelevant through ineffective spam control.

So let's see what the new year will bring. If you wish to comment on the above or offer your own assessments, [please write us](#) and we will publish your comments in the next issues. All the best to everyone!

→ Measuring Software Productivity

Steve McConnell, respected author and consultant, CEO and Chief Software Engineer at Construx Software, will give the next free ACM webinar on this subject on Monday, January 11 at noon Eastern US time (1700 GMT). He will discuss research findings and practical measurement techniques related to the productivity of software organizations, teams, and individuals. [Register here](#).

→ Coursera Offerings

Coursera, the online learning environment founded by Stanford University professors, is now offerings series of courses, completed by a "capstone project," that form "specializations" in various disciplines and grant the student a certificate. Among the many offerings:

- UC Irvine offers a three-course series on [project management](#)
- University of London has a five-course series on [full-stack web development](#)
- The University of Washington offers a three-course series on computational, statistical, and informational [data science](#).

Each of the courses in a series, as well as the capstone project, is priced at \$69 to \$79, so that the complete package costs between \$216 and \$474.

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→ Linguistic Rant

An article in TechRepublic caught our attention, not because of its content (a critique of the Apple Watch that wasn't particularly fair or informative) but because the author used "overhyped" in the title and "excessive hype" in the text. "Hype" is an abbreviation of "hyperbole," which Merriam-Webster defines as "extravagant exaggeration." Therefore, any superlative prefix or adjective is redundant and only proves two things, that the author doesn't know English well and that the magazine needs a better editor.

→ Seen Recently...

"IT's responsibility ends up being a combination of rapid delivery, compliance with Service Level Agreements, information security assurance, cost control, and management of the entire environment."

-- paraphrased from a talk by Judith Hurwitz on hybrid clouds

"We launched a controlled file sharing environment after finding out that about 500 Dropbox accounts had been created by employees."

-- Constant Contact CIO Jim Walsh, highlighting a common "shadow IT" challenge exacerbated by the availability of cheap cloud solutions.