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The Woes of Consumer IoT

In his blog The Monday Note, Jean-Louis Gassée, former executive at Apple and founder of Be Inc., excoriates the weaknesses and failures of the movement toward a consumer-oriented Internet of Things. His criticism, entitled "The Internet of Poorly Working Things," addresses expensive gadgets of doubtful interest; the fad of adding IoT capabilities to consumer electronics that already make little profit; disruptive software updates; complexity exceeding the users' capabilities; lack of security; and fragmented compatibility.

Gassée finds no redeeming value in this industry, but says that the *Industrial* Internet of Things is successful precisely because it devotes more resources and meets higher reliability and serviceability constraints.

(Thanks to Dave McCormick for spotting this.)

IoT Solutions World Congress

While we're on the topic of IoT, the IoT Solutions World Congress is coming up in Barcelona on Oct. 25-27. If you are going, don't miss the half-day information session by the Industrial Internet Consortium on Oct. 24. Contact us if you want to be invited.

Mayhem in Las Vegas

What happened in Las Vegas didn't stay in Las Vegas... at least in the case of the DEFCON computer security competition held there four weeks ago. This Japan News article reports on a vulnerability discovery and fixing contest in which computers competed without human intervention. The winning system, called Mayhem, was designed by a startup company, ForAllSecure Inc., founded by graduates of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

(Thanks to John Tulett for spotting this.)

Oh Hello, Grid, It's Been a Long Time...

The cloud almost effaced the grid from our collective geeky consciousness. But there are still interesting initiatives to distribute computing workloads across a wide-area network in certain sciences. University of Texas at Arlington was in the news just a few days ago for advances in its Production and Distributed Analysis (PanDA) workload management system. The new version improves the usage of TITAN, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory supercomputer built by Cray to process experimental data from the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Geneva.

Blockchain Interest Expanding Rapidly

Blockchain, the technology that serves as the foundation for cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, is enjoying a rapidly expanding level of interest as its applicability to other applications is demonstrated. To try to define Blockchain in a few words, it is a way to store a ledger of transactions in a distributed and encrypted form, so that there is no central control and it therefore becomes impossible to tamper with the record.

The financial industry is examining blockchain for its ability to secure financial transactions other than Bitcoin exchange, and among other potential uses, Australia Post is looking into it to secure electronic voting, as explained in this TechRepublic article.

Python with Concurrency

Every time a new programming language is invented, the question comes up: "Did we really need a new language?" The latest occurrence is the Lever language, a variation on Python with built-in facilities for concurrent programming and graphical user interface programming using OpenGL, a customizable syntax (a capability that sounds neat until you have to modify someone else's code) and several other features. Lever is an open-source project and is distributed under the MIT license.

Seen Recently...

"A user interface is like a joke -- if you have to explain it, it's not that good."

-- Attributed to Martin LeBlanc Eigtved, Web designer and UX consultant, CEO and Founder of Iconfinder.com

"A hybrid cloud is a technology you don't understand combined with another one."

-- Dilbert to his pointy-haired boss, in a Scott Adams cartoon created for a 2014 contest launched by VMware