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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology
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No. 200

This is the two-hundredth issue of this newsletter, started on June 1, 2009. This means close to 1000 mini-articles on a wide range of IT and knowledge management topics, following (and a few times anticipating) trends in cloud computing, Internet of Things, security, privacy, enterprise architecture, business process management and more.

For the next 100 issues, starting on October 1 with issue 201, we'd like more reader involvement. As you may have seen, we will publish comments, including those that disagree with a point we made. We also welcome contributed pieces such as a short summary of a conference, a book, an article, a statement read in the professional press, etc. The only constraints are (a) no outright publicity for a product, (b) articles must contain a link allowing the reader to learn more about the subject.

Thanks in advance!

Online Courses from Skillsoft®

The ACM Member Technical Service just published the latest list of the most popular courses made available to members by ACM's partner Skillsoft. Access to partner libraries of books and courses is one of the main benefits of ACM membership, which starts at $99 a year with discounts for students and retirees. We noted the following courses:

- Introduction to Algorithms and Data Structures
- The Basics of Blockchain
- C++ Fundamentals
- Getting Started with Amazon Web Services
- CISSP: Software Development Security
- Introduction to Python for Data Science
- Machine Learning Examples for Data Science in R
- Introduction to Project Management (PMBOK® Fifth Edition)

Speaking of Programming Languages...

The discussion about the popularity of programming languages, started in issue 198 and continued with Peter Coles' feedback in issue 199, motivated Dave Shipman to send the following thoughts.

"If this W^3Techs survey is to be taken into consideration, it looks like most sites use PHP (for front-end?), while some use Java and others for high-traffic needs. It seems like keeping PHP for the front while using Java for the back might be a good balancing point. Part of the reason I've taken to PHP is my comfort with C, with PHP feeling like C in a scripting language. [...] Python feels restrictive with its structural requirements, and its error messages [are cryptic]. [...] I'm interested in hearing what you might think of the subject of development with multiple languages that meet the differing needs between the back- and front-end for web applications."

Those of us who learned structured programming in the 1970s/80s, with languages derived from Algol such as Pascal, would argue that the structural requirements of Python are a strength -- forcing you to create a more readable program without all the braces and semicolons required in other languages. That debate started 40 years ago and will probably not end in our lifetimes. Does anyone want to offer comments or responses to Dave's points?

Cyber Everywhere: Collaboration, Integration, Automation

MeriTalk, an organization dedicated to "improving the outcomes of government IT" (it forgets to specify "U.S. government," but there isn't any other country that matters, is there?) is hosting a seminar at the Washington, D.C. Newseum on Wednesday, September 20 entitled "Cyber Everywhere: Collaboration, Integration, Automation." $295 in advance, $395 on site. Details and registration here.

Seen Recently...

"If proprietary predilections keep talent from learning about the digital progress made by [exploration and production] companies, it leaves the industry [...] lagging in recruitment and thus, lagging in quality."

-- Alex Endress in WorldOil, repeating a lament often heard in the hallways of Oil & Gas industry conferences, but which few people seem willing to tackle concretely. It happens in other industries too, but O&G seems particularly paranoid about sharing information or best practices.

"If you are not ashamed of the first version of your product, you probably released it too late."

-- Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn, who should probably ask LinkedIn developers why the n-th version of the LinkedIn web site is *still* something to be ashamed of.