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Foggy in Santa Clara (part 2)

Here are some highlights from the Fog World Congress, held in Santa Clara (Calif.) on Oct. 30-Nov. 1.

- Unsurprisingly, there were lots of Cisco people in attendance -- after all, they pretty much coined the term, founded the OpenFog Consortium, and sponsored the conference.
- Most talks started with "what is the fog?" Once is fine, twice may be useful, but more than ten are tiresome. The organizers could have controlled this better. At least the definitions and explanations were consistent across companies!
- A key message is that fog computing can address situations that the cloud cannot -- especially collaboration among multiple systems requiring low latency.
- A conservative estimate by 451 Research sized the market at $3.7 billion in 2019 and $18.2 billion in 2022. They said they only counted revenues "directly attributable" to fog computing, but there are lots of side effects too. See their full report here.
- There is a trend to move data analytics capabilities closer to the edge of the network (there isn't much a of distinction between "edge computing" and "fog computing").
- The "edge" means something different for telecom companies. For them, it's the last computing resources located within their networks, before reaching the cell towers. This is not the "edge" the users operate, which is made up of the devices out in the field.
- The research papers were very disappointing. "Solutions in search of problems" comes to mind.
- There was a lot of enthusiasm for autonomous cars and their integration into smart cities. This is a good case where high latency is not acceptable. Retail also seems to offer good promise. Other people said industrial automation, transportation, and Oil & Gas. There was little consistency.
- The standards world is a mess. Every group says "we believe in standards, and we want to work with others" but then explains that they developed their own.
- A breakout session on "fog computing in energy and environments" (sic) had only 15 people in it.
- Someone from AT&T (!) presented slides on which "Mbps" was misspelled "Mpbs" multiple times. Oops.
- There was an interesting paper on "federated analytics" in health sciences, using distributed computing to not only share the load, but also avoid privacy issues -- what leaves each hospital is only an aggregation of its local data, not patient details.
- Privacy was discussed several more times, including in terms of differences between the US and the rest of the world, by competent speakers and panelists.

IoT Market Study... Who Wants an IoT Market Study?

While some organization sell market studies for high prices (e.g., ASDReports), societies and vendors send them your way liberally. Of course, whether they're as valuable is for the buyer to determine. CABA, the Continental Automated Buildings Association (which continent?) recently sent these:

- The global smart home automation market is expected to reach $130 billion by 2025, according to Research and Markets, fueled by automation in security, lighting, HVAC, energy management, and smart kitchens.
- According to Zion Market Research, the global IoT sensors market was valued at around $7.5 billion in 2016 should reach $27+ billion in 2022 (meaningless decimals edited out), a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 24%.
- Smart self-checkouts systems in retail stores, used by only 4 million customers in the U.S. today, should reach 30 million users in five years, processing $78 billion in transactions vs. $10 billion today, according to a Juniper report. The report doesn't say if the systems will become reliable enough so that customers don't have to wait for a human to reset the machine half of the time!

No Magic Acquired by Dassault Systèmes

No Magic, one of the leading suppliers of software and systems modeling software that follows standards such as UML, BPMN and others, has been acquired by Dassault Systèmes, a French company whose roots are in the CAD/CAM software originally developed for internal use by aerospace and defense contractor Dassault.

This continues Dassault Systèmes progressive expansion of its portfolio of product lifecycle management applications, and is an acknowledgement that you cannot just model the mechanics and electronics of a product anymore -- you have to integrate the software models and be able to simulate the entire system.

Seen Recently...

"By 2018, every CIO will be running 1 to 5 digital transformation experiments -- or will be out."

-- Rod Risanty, ADLINK, interviewed at Fog World Congress