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Coming in from the Cold -- the Discussion

In the KIT No. 201, I reported on the February 13-14 "Blockchain, IoT and Machine Learning in Oil & Gas" conference held in Calgary. One of the summary points was that *"distributed ledgers can be used for many business purposes (such as securing contracts, avoiding disputes, and more) other than mining cryptocurrencies."*

Bertrand du Castel, an expert in the technology behind electronic transactions (among other subjects) wrote back: *"However, cryptocurrencies work by providing a fiduciary incentive for mining transaction tokens. What's the mining incentive in non-fiduciary applications?"*

I encourage other readers to join this discussion (e-mail us your comments). What has been clear (not just at this conference, but in use cases presented at other events over the past couple of years) is that there are several types of repetitive transactions (water hauling from storage tanks, filling tanker trucks at refineries, royalty payments, etc.) that are plagued with delays and disputes because there isn't a secure and non-repudiable record of the transactions. Blockchain offers a solution to those situations, and has indeed been applied successfully. A leading adopter is the electric utility industry, where blockchains are used to store the trading transactions between utilities, as well as within microgrids or between microgrids and the main grid. See these articles.

Information Day on Cybersecurity and the IoT

The Object Management Group is presenting a special series of talks and discussions on the impact of the Internet of Things on cybersecurity (and vice versa) on Monday, March 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Hyatt Town Center in Reston, Va. (near Washington DC's Dulles airport). The morning will be a succession of presentations on various aspects of IoT security. The afternoon will consist of a poster session about various standards efforts, followed by a panel.

After the formal end of the meeting, attendees can choose to network with each other while waiting for the 5:00 p.m. demonstration of security interoperability between multiple products that implement the OMG's Distributed Data Service (DDS) protocol.

The fee of $99 includes attendance and lunch. Register here.

Predictions for the Smart Home

Mark Vena, writing for Forbes and quoted in the NewsBrief of CABA (Continental Automated Building Association), proposed six predictions for the smart home. Here are the four we find most worthy of mention:

- "Cord-cutting" solutions, i.e. wireless connections, will become common, especially in entertainment systems (but we love our wireless printers too)
- New, non-inductive wireless charging solutions will emerge that do not require placing the device directly on top of a charging pad. They may initially only provide "trickle charging," but that's better than nothing.
- Apple's HomePod will offer valid competition to Amazon's Alexa and Echo, in spite of its higher cost.
- The home security solutions market will surpass $50 billion by 2022, but it is full of small companies that will not survive.

→ Machine Learning in Oil & Gas

Join Anadarko, Chevron, Sanchez Oil & Gas and more at "Machine Learning in Oil & Gas" in Houston, April 18-19. See the draft agenda here. The second afternoon will include parallel working groups on workflow optimization through machine learning, cyber vulnerability assessment, and data governance, followed by a panel of investors in AI technology.

The early bird discount ends tomorrow, March 2. Register here.

→ Virtual Team Dynamics

Under the rather academic and austere title of "Disaggregating the Impacts of Virtuality on Team Identification," Lionel Robert and Sangseok You presented at the 2018 ACM Conference on Supporting Groupwork a paper on the impact of new modes of remote collaboration on the sense of team identity experienced by the participants.

The paper is based on a study of 55 teams comprising 248 participants. While the findings are not terribly conclusive, the paper argues convincingly that reliance on electronic communication between team members can in some cases strengthen rather than weaken the sense of belonging in the team, and can help offset negative impacts of perceived differences among team members.

→ Seen Recently...

"Digital transformation doesn't have a chance in an organization with a risk-averse culture, where new ideas get killed and where all decisions are taken top-down."

-- Sheila Cox, Cutter Consortium consultant