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## The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology

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**In This Issue**

[Another Glimpse at Startups](#)

[From Information Modeling to Ontology](#)

[Networking and IT Operations in the Cloud](#)

[Hybrid Computing World Congress](#)

[Seen Recently](#)

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→ **Another Glimpse at Startups**

The last meeting of the Industrial Internet Consortium, held in Raleigh on Feb. 11-14, included an evening at RIoT Labs (R as in Raleigh), an incubator for startups that benefits from the proximity of the North Carolina Research Triangle universities (NC State, Duke, and UNC Chapel Hill). RIoT Labs and IIC joined forces to produce a pitch competition with four contestants. One of them really had nothing to do with IT, but here is a summary (critical comments included) of the other three.

**Trilliot** proposes to use RAIN tags (a type of RFID tags) to track all sorts of things, including "auditables, consumables, and returnables." This venture did not seem to introduce anything fundamentally new compared to the RFID tags that emerged twenty years ago. Moreover, the privacy concerns raised by the first deployments of RFID in retail at that time are likely to limit the uptake.

**ProAxiom** offers sensors and gateways for predictive maintenance of machinery. Data is transmitted to the cloud using cellular signals, which allows the customer to install the solution without requiring IT's approval or its networking resources. The company has 40 customers and has deployed 900 sensors, which sell for \$600 (support costs \$300 after the first year). The current solution does not use machine learning, so the prediction scheme must be fairly crude -- based mostly on detecting vibrations. Again, there didn't seem to be new significant intellectual property compared to the scores of other companies offering condition-based monitoring, often supported by AI.

**BruVue** optimizes the delivery of beer kegs to bars by installing sensors on the taps, instead of flowmeters on the lines or level sensors in the kegs. As a result, there is no need to cut the lines or to use special kegs. As in the previous case, data is sent over the cellular network. Each sensor is rented for \$15 per month, and operates on a coin battery that lasts 9 months. This company won the award for the night -- the solution seemed novel (with patentable technology), credible, and had clear market numbers and no obvious competition.

One of the lessons is that IoT isn't just useful in high-tech sectors. Another one is that redoing something that's already been done doesn't get you to win big in the "shark tank."

→ **Don't Fear the "O" Word**

Cory Casanave (Model Driven Solutions) and Claude Baudoin co-wrote a short paper, "From Information Modeling to Ontology," just published by the Cutter Consortium. The authors explain the value of a business-wide enterprise information model, why "there is an ontology in your future," and why this word, which may sound mysterious and pretentiously theoretical to business stakeholders, need not scare them.

→ **Networking and IT Operations for the Cloud**

Enterprise Management Associates (EMA), a Colorado-based research and analysis firm, published a report on "Network Engineering and Operations in a Multi-Cloud World," based as is usually the case on surveys of a few hundred IT managers. They will present the results of this work during a [webinar on March 13](#) at 11 AM Pacific, 2 PM Eastern, 18:00 UTC, 19:00 CET (this event falls during the twice-yearly chaotic period when various countries change time in dispersed order, resulting in unusual time differences).



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## → It's Not the Good, Simple Old Days Anymore

When the cloud started gaining notoriety, things were relatively simple -- you could rent access to an application (Software as a Service) or to some chunk of computing or storage capacity (Infrastructure as a Service). And then things got much more complex in a hurry, as the OMG's upcoming "Practical Guide to Cloud Deployment Technologies," slated for publication at the end of this month, will demonstrate. But before we even got to that, the clear-cut distinction between on-premises and cloud deployment models disappeared as hybrid clouds were introduced. An early proponent and thought leader was Judith Hurwitz, lead author of "Hybrid Cloud for Dummies" (2012). Skip a few years, and now this approach has its own conference series, the [Hybrid Cloud World Forum](#), coming to a city (almost) near you: Beijing on March 21-22, Santa Clara on July 25-26, and London on November 21-22.

## → Seen Recently...

*"We are not teaching computer science just so we can create more software developers. We need our politicians, lawyers, and other professions and leaders to understand computer science."*

-- [Lien Diaz](#) of the [Constellations Center for Equity in Computing](#).