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## The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology

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➔ **Happy Birthday to Us!**

cébé IT & Knowledge Management is officially ten years old since yesterday. The LLC, now domiciled in California, was registered in Texas on June 2, 2009.

➔ **Cloud Deployment Technologies**

Containers as a service, FaaS/serverless, unikernels... confused yet? Technologies to deploy cloud services have multiplied over the past few years. Each approach presents advantages and challenges, and different cost implications. If you missed Karl Scott's presentation during the OMG hour-long webinar on this topic on March 29, you can [watch the replay here](#).

➔ **A Bump in the Cloud**

While we're on one of our favorite subjects, [GeekWire reported](#) last week about the difficulties Oracle is encountering with its cloud strategy (the jokes about an "oracle" not being able to foresee the future are inevitable). Specifically, Oracle has laid off 300 people from its Seattle office, which was supposed to be key to its strategy of competing with Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.

If you believe the titles of other GeekWire articles from last year about Oracle's cloud strategy, this is not the only cumulonimbus over Larry Ellison's head. Examples:

- "Oracle still can't make up its mind about how it fits into the cloud era."
- "Instead of a real check on the growing power of Amazon Web Services, Oracle's Larry Ellison offers nothing but words."
- "After reportedly butting heads with Larry Ellison, Oracle's top cloud executive is leaving the company."
- "As it shifts cloud focus to platform services, Oracle tries to hold on to its database legacy."

➔ **From the Startup World**

Our latest visit to the San Francisco startup world didn't yield as many promising companies as previous ones. We noted:

- [Unistellar](#), a company that makes the first lightweight "IoT telescope" controlled from a smartphone app, with software to share data within a community of customers. There are 3000 units on pre-order, and plans to deliver 100,000 by 2023. The initial price is \$2500 and should decrease toward \$1000 over time.
- [Say Yay!](#), an app to help U.S. voters review candidates and propositions on upcoming ballots (which are famously complex in this country, due to the large number of elected positions at the state and local level, as well as citizen initiatives), based on a profile each user builds in advance by choosing between alternative statements on various issues.

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## → Foundations of Data Science

On June 15 in San Francisco, ACM and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) are hosting the ACM-IMS Interdisciplinary Summit on the Foundations of Data Science. Topics will include deep learning, reinforcement learning, fairness, and ethics, as well as the future of data science and the role of ACM and IMS. Keynote speakers are Jeff Dean, the head of AI at Google, and Daphne Koller, Stanford Professor of Computer Science and co-founder of Coursera. [Register here.](#)

## → Different World, Same Problems...

During a recent discussion with several leaders of information management projects at a major university, we saw problems that are typical in the corporate world:

- Lack of a single comprehensive information model of the institution. Instead, each project creates *de facto* its own data model (bottom-up) with a high risk of duplicate or inconsistent records for students, faculty, etc.
- When common tools are used, each department procures and manages licenses on its own, potentially costing the university more money than necessary.
- There is no knowledge management strategy to share best practices across groups -- only some timid tactical moves toward common tools, and no willingness by any department to lead more serious work ("it's IT's problem").
- Overall, a very strongly "siloed" approach in spite of many common needs.

In a corporation, this could be solved by a decision from above. But in a university, the President or Provost (let alone the CIO) has no such power -- the department heads are the real bosses, and they have little incentive to work together. So while one part of the university teaches advanced subjects in computer science, product design, and business management, another part is doing no better than the average company!

## → Seen Recently...

*"Reflections on IT project growth: Projects are species and staff/task bundles are organisms. Growth is S-shaped because of the social metabolic process for conversion of requirements into features within a niche."*

(No, we don't quite understand it either. So we hid the name of the author to protect him from mob revenge.)