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The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology

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→ **Vol. 12, No. 1**

If we had numbered our newsletters the way magazines do, this would be "Volume 12, Number 1." That's because cébé is 11 years old today, so we're starting the twelfth continuous year of semi-monthly publication. Thanks for your continued interest!

→ **Second Virtual OMG Quarterly Meeting**

COVID-19 forced the Object Management Group to switch to a virtual meeting for the first time in its 31-year existence with its March meeting, and the difficult but logical decision was made to also hold a virtual second-quarter meeting instead of assembling in Orlando as planned. The meeting will be held on June 22-26 (the original schedule).

There is, however, a (rare) silver lining to this cloud. Since the meeting costs are now minimal, OMG is offering *free* registration to OMG member organizations, as well as a deeply discounted rate of \$250 to non-members. For that price, you can remotely attend any of the many sessions that will be held during the week. See the meeting information and registration link [here](#).

Claude Baudoin will be co-chairing three of the sessions taking place that week:

- The Business Modeling and Integration Task Force on Monday ([agenda here](#))
- The Artificial Intelligence Task Force on Tuesday ([agenda here](#))
- The Cloud Working Group on Wednesday ([agenda here](#))

Again, these sessions (and more on Finance, Government, Healthcare, Space, C4I, Analysis & Design, Middleware, Blockchain, etc.) are all available to anyone for a flat \$250 fee. We hope you can attend!

→ **Is That Vendor Evaluation Really Unbiased?**

Tony Byrne, founder of [The Real Story Group](#) (tag line "Make Better Technology Decisions") wrote an excellent article a week ago, [Five Signs that Vendors Influenced an Analyst Report](#). The criticism of Gartner is very thinly veiled: Byrne presents early on a satirical version of that company's well-known "magic quadrant" (in which vendors are classified into leaders, challengers, visionaries, and niche players), which he dubs the "mystical quadrant": mystics, geeks, posers, and losers. He goes on to present some of the telltale signs that a vendor evaluation is less than candid:

1. The evaluation or comparison report calls product shortcomings "challenges"
2. It takes vendor promises as certain ("it will be in the next release")
3. It criticizes the product's positioning or marketing -- as if this really mattered to the customer
4. It gives all the products a good grade (usually at least 8 on a 0--10 scale)
5. It avoids talking about difficult but critical topics (scalability, usability, etc.)

The author ends with some practical advice: use multiple sources, look for candor, ask tough questions, mistrust reports that do not contain serious criticisms.

If you look at the sidebar of this newsletter, you'll see "Enterprise Software Selection" as one of our services. Might that be a hint?

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➔ Bad Code in Science

A team of researchers at Imperial College London recently published [open-source code](#) to simulate the spread of COVID-19. People in the software community screamed in horror as they looked at the code. Well, infectious disease specialists are not software engineering experts, and why do we have languages that allow them to write horrible programs? This was one of the points made by Konrad Hinsen in his blog post entitled "[An open letter to software engineers criticizing Neil Ferguson's epidemics simulation code.](#)"

Hinsen points out that researchers do not have the knowledge, or often the budget, to hire professional software people on their team. Besides, asking them to do so it akin to saying that you should hire a mechanic before you can drive a car. And software people should look at themselves in the mirror before criticizing the users of their tools: *"It's you, the software engineering community, that is responsible for tools like C++ that look as if they were designed for shooting yourself in the foot. It's also you, the software engineering community, that has made no effort to warn the non-expert public of the dangers of these tools."*

➔ Seen Recently...

"I'm really excited to see the world that Millennials and Gen-Z are going to build together. It may take us longer than we would hope, but it gives me something to look forward to."

-- [Kendall Scudder](#), blogger and "recovering politician" from Dallas, voicing a rare note of optimism on May 31, a sad day of disease and rage