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The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology

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In This Issue

[Did Microsoft Ruin Skype?](#)

[MIT CDOIQ Symposium
\(Discounts!\)](#)

[Knowledge Graphs and
Ontologies](#)

[NIST Draft Publication on
Storage Security](#)

[CSA Call for Volunteers for
their DLT Framework](#)

[Seen Recently](#)



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- IT Strategy
- Enterprise Architecture Roadmap
- Business Process Modeling & Analysis
- Enterprise Software Selection
- IT Innovation Briefings
- IT Due Diligence
- Executive IT Seminars
- Cloud Computing
- Security Maturity
- Software Process
- Knowledge Strategy
- Technical Communities
- Knowledge Capture
- Taxonomy development
- Enterprise Social Media

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→ Did Microsoft Ruin Skype? And What Does It Teach Us?

Nick Stavros sent in a link to a [well-researched video](#) by Jose Cayasso, aka "Caya," CEO of Slidebean, about the history of Skype and how its technical capabilities fared under successive owners, most recently Microsoft. Part of the discussion is about the original use of peer-to-peer technology, derived from Kazaa, which was later replaced by a centralized system with cloud-based servers.

In his comments, Nick considers the impact of similar issues to other systems, in particular blockchain: *"Skype was originally peer to peer, then came Microsoft... interesting story how poor systems and software engineer[ing] brought a product so 'yesterday'. Many of these problems need to be studied with regards to blockchain cryptocurrency and DLT. To be successful, I strongly believe that the future has to be tied to distributed computing and the future needs to be engineered... not discovered on a random walk through technology and hype. There needs to be more focus on the non-functional 'ilities' [such as] maintainability, scalability, portability. This is I think [why] Facebook's Libra crypto[currency] is not well done: it's server-based."*

In fact, Caya does not blame the move away from P2P technology for Skype's woes; on the contrary, he credits it for improving its reliability. When it comes to distributed ledger technology, which is Nick's concern, other criteria come into play such as the risk of subverting the voting mechanism or the inability to conduct transactions during an outage of central servers (one could digress into a discussion of the distinction between reliability and resiliency). Which is a way to say that both can be right...

After watching the video (it's worth the 12 minutes you'll spend), please read the viewers' comments. Some good points are made there too.

→ MIT CDOIQ Symposium

The 14th edition of the MIT [Chief Data Officer and Information Quality Symposium](#) (CDOIQ) will take place online on August 18-20. You can see the agenda at the above link.

Information architecture and data governance are clearly important. Whether this means that a position such as "Chief Data Officer" should exist is a matter of debate in our opinion. Why is the CIO not in charge of the information? Is it because, in the words of Steve Andriole (another senior consultant at the Cutter Consortium), "CIO" has come to mean "Cheap Infrastructure Operator" instead of "Chief Information Officer" in many enterprises? If that's the case, then why would a company that doesn't understand the CIO's strategic role give more consideration to a CDO? And if the CIO is seen as a member of the C-suite, as the title implies, then shouldn't the "CDO" be simply the "chief information architect" (but not yet another "officer") reporting to the CIO?

Regardless of this criticism, the Symposium's program promises to be interesting. Registration was lowered to \$745 because the event is virtual, and here is the deal we have for you: MIT gave us ONE free pass as well as a number of 50% discounts (until the event is at capacity -- it is 80% booked right now). *There is a condition: you must be a CDO or fulfill an equivalent function in your organization.* MIT will be sole judge of whether you meet that condition. Please [reply to apply](#). Specify if you are interested in the 50% discount if the free pass is gone. The free pass will be on a first come, first served basis.



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→ Knowledge Graphs and Ontologies

During its next quarterly meeting, the Object Management Group is offering a special online "meet-and-greet" on [Knowledge Graphs and Ontologies](#) (it was originally planned for March, but was postponed amid the scramble to switch from in-person to online meetings). The new date is Monday, September 14, 5:00-7:00 pm EDT (2100-2300 GMT). *The registration page currently shows a physical location in California, and will be corrected soon.*

KGs and ontologies are key forms of knowledge representation that support machine reasoning. Therefore, they are fundamental building blocks of AI. Registration for the event is *free*.

→ Storage Security

Olivier Caleff of the Cloud Security Alliance informs us that the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is putting the final touches to a new document, *Special Publication (SP) 800-209, Security Guidelines for Storage Infrastructure*. The [final draft](#) is available for review and comments (see instructions on the cover page) until August 31, 2020.

→ Call for Contributions to a DLT Framework

Hilary Baron, also of the Cloud Security Alliance, is recruiting volunteers to help the CSA's DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology) and Blockchain Working Group develop a series of documents and tools to build a "DLT Framework."

The list of topics on which expertise is sought, and the instructions to respond to the call, are [available here](#).

→ Seen Recently...

"The police got in a foot chase with a computer hacker. They didn't catch him: he ransomware..."

-- @garz on Twitter (boo...)

"COVID-19 pushing telcos to boost customer service to empower at-home workers."

-- Title of [an article in TechRepublic](#), which makes you wonder, are they admitting that before the pandemic they didn't give a hoot about providing good customer service?