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The KIT — Knowledge & Information Technology
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Technology for the Future of Retail

The modernization of retail commerce system started years before COVID-19 created a sudden need to accelerate digital transformation. In the U.S., the Association for Retail Technology Standards (ARTS) division of the National Retail Federation engaged years ago in the development of standards for point-of-sale (POS) terminals, a common data model, an architecture for retail systems, and more. In 2017, the standardization work of ARTS migrated to the Object Management Group and became OMG's Retail Domain Task Force (RDTF). See an overview of its work here.

Some of the standards being developed may seem mundane (standardizing the credit card receipts printed at the point of sale, or the format of the data delivered to sales tax authorities), others are very advanced (using video analytics and AI not only for surveillance, but also to guide customers, identify empty shelves, find lost items, detect spills, identify loyalty program members through facial recognition, improve item placement, etc.).

Richard Halter, President of Global Retail Technology Advisors, and self-styled "Wizard of POS," offers on his YouTube channel a collection of 25 animated videos, varying from 5 to 20 minutes in length, that together cover this wide range of technology uses and system architectures for retail. If you want more information, Richard's contact information appears at the end of each video.

Discussion on the Cost of Cloud Storage

BWG Connect, Auth0 and Amazon Web Services will host a discussion among senior IT managers on September 30, 1:30-2:30 p.m. EDT (17:30-18:30 GMT), focusing on understanding the total cost of data storage and best practices to forecast and control it. "There are no sales pitches, presentations or costs to join, but space is limited and all participants are subject to BWG approval." Apply here to request an invitation.

A Hybrid Cloud for the Oil & Gas Industry

Multiple sources, including the September 8 issue of IBM News, carried the news of an agreement between IBM, Red Hat and oilfield services leader Schlumberger to create a joint offering of cloud services to oil companies. The initial offering includes DELFI, a "cognitive" environment for collaborative workflows, data analytics and AI; and the Open Subsurface Data Universe (OSDU) data platform. OSDU is the result of a cross-industry collaboration under the auspices of the Open Group, and uses open source code contributed by Schlumberger from the data management layer of DELFI.

The underlying cloud technology is Red Hat OpenShift, described in the press releases as "the leading Kubernetes platform." IBM's contribution is through IBM Services, as a consultant to vertical industries. This fact and the use of Red Hat seem to confirm the continued evolution of IBM toward a pure services company.

→ Microprocessors and Politics

The purchase of UK microprocessor manufacturer ARM by U.S. company Nvidia is not as simple as it seemed when it was announced on September 13. Incidentally, it is notable that Softbank bought ARM for $32 billion in 2016 and is selling it now for $40 billion, not exactly a stellar profit; but this is not where the rub is. Hermann Hauser, co-founder of ARM, has asked the UK government to stop the sale or impose certain conditions to it, because it would place a leading British technology company under U.S. control, and as a result could in particular prevent ARM from continuing to sell its technology to countries to which such technology transfers are prohibited by U.S. laws.

There is some *déjà vu* here, but in reverse. In 1987, the sale of Fairchild, a money-losing U.S. chipmaker, to Fujitsu was blocked by the U.S. government because this was the height of the "Japanese scare" in the microelectronics industry and because Fairchild was making specialized circuits for the U.S. military. Instead, Fairchild ended up being bought by National Semiconductor... which no longer exists today. It would take an entire issue of The KIT to tell the whole sad story. The common point to both stories is that technology and geopolitics do not mix well.

→ Seen Recently...

"In my time, TikTok was a song by Kesha."

-- Nico (@nicotiq69), originally in Spanish