

San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

February 11, 2009

Enhancing corporate IT departments

By Andrew S. Ross

Intel, Chevron have tool-kit to enhance corporate IT

What Blu-ray is to high-def DVDs, and VHS is to videotape, a high-powered consortium led by Intel Corp. and Chevron Corp. is offering a similar industry standard, this one for corporate IT departments. The project was unveiled at Chevron's San Ramon headquarters on Tuesday, with CIOs and senior IT executives from other consortium members, including Microsoft Corp., Northrop Grumman Corp., Ernst & Young and the Boston Consulting Group in attendance. They were there to launch what's called the IT Capability Maturity Framework (IT-CMF). In as plain English as I can muster, IT-CMF provides a set of tools for companies to assess and improve the efficiency and performance of their IT departments, and to integrate IT more tightly into the company's overall operation.

As dry and mind-numbingly technical as it sounds, the idea comes along at a particularly relevant time, with companies desperately seeking the maximum bucks out of their IT budget, while looking to technological innovation as one way to dig out from under the Great Recession. "This is a very good time to bring it to market," said Intel's head of IT Innovation, Michael Curley, who worked with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth to form the consortium. Named the Innovation Value Institute, Intel, Chevron and other members have been beta-testing the framework for the past two years. Now, the not-for-profit organization will begin to roll out elements to interested companies, large and small. The complete set of tools will be on the market by the first half of 2010, said Curley.

To hear Tuesday's audio presentation and see demonstration slides, go to links.sfgate.com/ZGCP.

To find out more about the Innovation Value Institute, go to ivi.nuim.ie.

Nudged out: Speaking of innovation, we were hoping to bring you Nolan Bushnell's latest thoughts on the subject. I had been invited to hear the man known as the "father of the video game industry" Pong, Atari, Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theater. He was giving a talk titled "Personal Story: Forty Years of Innovation," hosted Tuesday by Silicom Ventures, an angel investor group in Los Altos. Then I was informed that Mr. Bushnell "asked not to have reporters attend his talk." No explanation offered. Surely he's not blaming the media for the impending collapse of his latest venture, uWink, which enabled restaurant patrons to order food and wine while they were playing video games on the same screen. And vice-versa. Reportedly uWink had, in finance parlance, "serious liquidity issues." So serious that, on Friday, its stock, currently hovering around zero, will be delisted from the lowly OTC Bulletin Board.



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