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SiliconANGLE » Turning Data Into Actionable Knowledge Is Key To Big Data Management [CEO Series]

Turning Data Into Actionable Knowledge is Key to Big Data Management [CEO Series]

KRISTEN NICOLE | APRIL 16TH

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Scaling mountains of data is becoming a necessary skill set in today's business and consumer world. Envisioning the systems behind this is ZL Technologies CEO Kon Leong, an



inquisitive man with a provocative perspective.



Running a company that provides software solutions for enterprise's unmanageable big data problem, Leong has an idea or two on how systems should be developed, implemented and scaled.

In today's Snapshot Profile series Leong shares his ideal system for managing unstructured data, the importance of compounded knowledge in today's enterprise and consumer spaces, and his favorite coding language—profanity.

What are 3 of the most significant historic circumstances that have shaped big data demands for the enterprise?

Big Data enterprise demands on the structured data side are better known and of lesser mystery in evolution.

On the unstructured Big Data side, however, the demand metamorphosis has been fascinating. The set of technologies required to make sense of unstructured data did not come together until recently. For many years, the enterprise simply took the “ostrich” approach and ignored unstructured data. Then came the first tsunami of unstructured content, spawned by the quake of wide-scale usage of the Net. Email and attachments rode the crest of that wave. Still, the enterprise simply stuck its head in deeper into the ground and ignored the tidal wave of content flooding every nook and corner. Finally, around the close of 2006, there came a second quake, with its epicenter coming from the legal quarter – the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) which put the onus on the enterprise to finally get its flood control systems around unstructured content. Since that watershed event, there has been a consistent and concerted attempt to manage unstructured Big Data, spurred further by demands from compliance, corporate governance and records management.



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Your ideal system for managing unstructured data?

The ideal system for unstructured Big Data management is fairly obvious and practically déjà vu. It parallels the evolution of “ERP” from the early days of “silos” in the 1960's which cobbled various components such as Accounting, Inventory Management, Order Entry, Manufacturing Scheduling, Bills of Material, and so on. This approach did not last long and the compelling need to put it all together into one functioning system led to the emergence of current-day ERP players such as SAP.

There were similar developments in the unstructured data space, where applications cropped up in ad hoc manner and were stood up as “silos.”

First came storage optimization (circa 2000), followed by compliance (2002), e-discovery (2005) and records management (2008). However, these silos created more headaches and were exacerbated by the massive volumes of unstructured data, which, in many Fortune 500 enterprises, rivaled data volumes at Google. As with ERP, the emerging and obvious answer to unstructured Big Data is to put it all together in one functioning system – a unified system. There is simply no other choice.



How can compounded knowledge help the enterprise and consumers in the future?

Information is good. More information is better. Today, however, the overflow of information threatens to overwhelm the capacity of human processing. Not many of us have stopped to take stock of the massive leaps and bounds in volumes by which our data have grown in the past few years. It was not so long ago that our PC held a thousand files. Today, they can easily number in the hundreds of thousands. In this context, technology can and should come to the rescue to help grapple with the problem of too much information.

Thankfully, the progress of intelligent search and analytics technologies has been encouraging of late. Turning information into actionable knowledge will be the linchpin of Big Data management.

What gives you confidence in/for the future?

Human adaptability has always been our mainstay for survival, and in the high tech sector, it is no different. No matter how daunting the challenges, we have always collectively stepped up to meet them. We only need to look at the proliferation of disasters of epidemic proportions, such as AIDS, swine flu and avian flu, to realize that while don't have all the answers, we can usually come up with enough to cope with and then overcome the problems.

Confidence, someone once said, is that feeling you get before you find out what's really going on. I say it's the bootstrapping that takes place after you realize you haven't got much to lose.

SYSTEMS IDEALIST

KON LEONG

Coffee or tea?

Coffee or Tea? Tea. But what's Ms. Leoni got to do with it?

Favorite era?

Australopithecus. Because I like the sound of it.

Favorite coding language?

When coding, profanity.



About Kristen Nicole

Named by Forbes as a top influencer in Big Data, Kristen Nicole is currently a Senior Editor at SiliconANGLE.com. She got her start with 606tech, a Chicago blog she dedicated to the social media space, going on to become the lead writer and Field Editor at Mashable. Kristen Nicole has also contributed to other publications, from TIME Techland to Forbes. Her work has been syndicated across a number of media outlets, including The New York Times, and MSNBC. Kristen Nicole published her first book, The Twitter Survival Guide, and is currently completing her second book on predictive analytics. Follow my work (and some sprinklings of personal interests) on Google+ [View all posts by Kristen Nicole →](#)

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