

Data trends



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My new digital classroom

Last week I presented a 20 minute talk at the PPDM luncheon in Perth on technologies that stand to change the future of the geophysical and data management industry. I covered Blockchain, IoT (Internet of things), Hadoop and Watson (IBM's cognitive computing offering).

I am no expert on these areas, but I have done some casual reading and have taken a general interest in the unfolding of new technologies including things not even remotely related to geophysics, like Uber and Instagram.

Someone in the audience at this PPDM talk asked me how I keep up to date on these technologies – some of which they had never heard of. The answer was podcasts. Podcasts have become a significant part of my daily routine. I don't just listen to podcasts on technology either – I also partake of several social/entertainment podcasts and a mix of podcasts that blur the line between entertainment and technology. If you don't know what a podcast is here is the Wikipedia definition: 'A podcast is an episodic series of digital audio files which a user can subscribe to so that new episodes are automatically downloaded via web syndication to the user's own local computer, mobile application, or portable media player'. The name came from the combination of the words iPod and broadcast.

I was introduced to podcasts by my wife Amanda, who was listening to a podcast called 'Sex Death and Money' (from WNYC Studios) one day when she was doing laundry. I came home from work

early and opened the front door and heard a man talking about the best way to kill a husband. I stood just inside the front door of my house for 5 minutes, with the door part way open just in case I needed to make a quick getaway, before I realised that it was a podcast and not some hit man that my wife had hired. Needless to say it piqued my curiosity.

There are hundreds of thousands of podcasts you can choose from depending on your interests. Some are single episodes on a particular subject that changes every week, and others are serial (each new episode follows on from the last like a series of different chapters from the same book). My wife chose a podcast on how to murder me, and many of you may wish to subscribe to that one as well, but for others with less determination and broader interests you can choose subjects that are less detrimental to my health.

The Society of Exploration Geophysics has a podcast called Seismic Soundoff, which is a series of in depth conversations in applied geophysics. If you are interested in geology there is the Geology Flannelcast made by three grad students who purportedly 'discuss geology topics that no one else dares to touch'. It just so happens that the podcast is one that I don't dare to touch. But if you like soil analysis and Milankovitch cycles, this one may be for you.

My personal favourites vary widely. 'How I Built This' hosted by Gay Raz from NPR radio is focussed on innovators and entrepreneurs and 'Start Up' from Gimlet media is a series about what it's really like to start a business. Those two are two on the top of my favourites list.

On the technology front, I listen to the 'Ted Radio Hour', which is a choice TED talk mixed with in depth interviews from the speakers who gave the talk, as well as the AWS podcast (Amazon Web Services), which details all of the new developments in cloud based computing, storage, etc. on the Amazon platform.

I highly recommend subscribing to a few podcasts and giving them a try. Anyone who has a commute to the office of more than 15 minutes can use that time to learn about a new topic in an entertaining and well written format that takes no effort at all to consume.

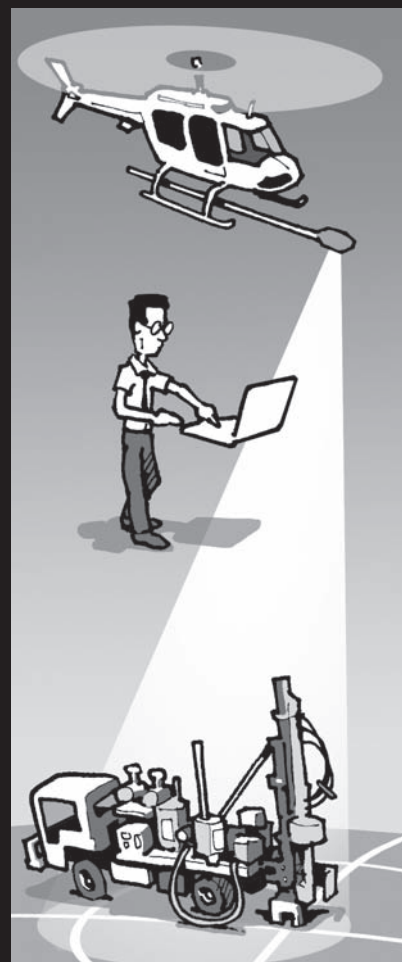
Now – back to looking for a podcast about how not to get murdered.

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