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Why building planners, architects, housing sector and real estate managers, system integrators and ICT System Houses should attend the NEW CEBIT

Everyone talks about the upcoming new CEBIT. Europe's Business Festival for Innovation and Digitization is completely reorganized and a modern B2B event format for trade visitors. The conference and exhibition focus on the latest technologies and developments in the digitalization of business, the public sector and society. The set-up is complemented by a unique networking atmosphere on the d!campus.

Changes already became apparent in previous years: Industry 4.0, M2M, Internet of Things - the topics of digital transformation kept pushing onto the exhibition grounds. Since they are software-driven by their very nature and mainly IP-based, they therefore form the core competence of ICT experts.

The computer turns digital - artificial intelligence has long left the computer casings and, in future, will be found in an increasing number of small control boxes inside and on buildings, in equipment or machines, and it has also become mobile. Everything connects to everything else - digitalisation is changing our living and work environment step by step. This goes hand in hand with data collection (user behaviour to optimise control of consumption or as a basis for military actions - in other words Big Data). Fact is: The increasing risk of cyber attacks can only be met by an adequate and consistent improvement of IT security structures. The IT security market is therefore growing parallel to the Smart Building market.

This is another reason why in future CEBIT will become a lot more important than it recently has been. In the next 10-15 years digitalisation is going to change the world more than the computerisation of the last 40 years. In time of big (economic) changes, once again the quickest, not the biggest ones will win.

Consumer Electronics as a door opener for SmartHome

The Smart Building industry, at least in Europe, has up to now focused on the well-organised electronics sector, which became established as the main installer of Smart Building in the actual buildings, whereas the consumer electronics industry acted as a door opener in recent years. The installing electronics-IT-system house unfortunately does not exist (yet) - the electrics / plumbing / construction industry is currently still too unfamiliar with (IT) systems.

In a similar way as the US iPhone first created and then boosted the global smart phone market 10 years ago, it is once again a US company that, in just 1.5 years, managed to open the Smart Home market to consumer awareness more than all European market players combined managed over the past 10 years: Amazon and its talking data collector "Alexa" (Google and Apple have meanwhile launched similar products on the market, of course). This is why the SmartHome market is now recording significant growth within the Consumer Electronics and Home Appliances sectors. The retail markets, by means of their market-opening function, therefore keep pushing the smart development.

Deep inside, every SmartHome or Smart Building solution is an IT solution

A significantly larger proportion of intelligent building, equipment and machine control, and their networking and monitoring, however, will be held by the area of professional building automation including physical security and, in particular, the topic of IT security. The necessary market penetration of the latter is not only due to the international technological development but also to the required sustainable competitiveness of building owners and the companies, authorities or

other users of the building related to it. The growth of smart building technology will lead to a significant growth of the IT security market in particular - experts predict that, in 10-20 years time, we will be dealing with intelligent buildings whose parts and contents will be connected in such a smart way that they communicate with each other and thus make (programmed) decisions on their own. In contrast to the retail market's fast moving serial products, the professional smart building market is organised considerably more sustainably and with more lead time: for buildings, a period of 2-5 years is calculated for planning, 1-3 years for construction and a lifecycle of 50++ years. It has to be kept in mind, however, that these slower cycles involve considerably higher investments than retail products. The large proportion of IT services also has to be underlined once more.
This means: without considerable participation or integration of the ICT world into the Smart Building market this market will hardly be able to develop as it requires the core competence of many ICT experts to install, maintain and control (while the electrician physically installs) the smart control systems, all of which are software-driven and IT based. This already has to be considered at the very beginning of building technology planning - irrespective of whether new buildings or the even bigger market for existing buildings are concerned.

Electronic meets IT

Just like electrical companies usually install the entire wiring of a building - not only power cables and related switchboards but also planned computer cables - but normally leave the computers themselves (and usually the telephone system as well) including all of its software and applications to the ICT system houses (while the telephone system has already vanished into the IT cloud), a similar thing takes place, or should take place, in the field of Smart Building. The electrical company installs everything, while the ICT company manages the individually required software applications, configures the hardware and, as a consequence, trains, maintains and controls the Smart Building control system and develops it further from the established basis onwards. Of course the market also already features (in a small number) the business type of systems integrator, who is an expert in both the electrical as well as the ICT world and therefore able to deliver and install everything one-stop. Another aspect is that electricians only install actuator technology (everything using 230 volt), while the sensor technology is installed by the ICT system house as this requires neither an electrician nor wiring. (In many cases, however, electricians do not install the meter cabinets with fuses and actuators themselves as this is done by specialised companies).

First in line both time-wise and content-wise, however, are building planners, engineering companies for building technologies, architects as well as property owners and managers and/or users, due to their high influence as decision makers and concept developers on the design and investment of Smart Building solutions - or, in short: simply everyone involved in the housing and building economy.
Also to be kept in mind are the authorities granting building permissions as well as the relevant persons responsible for legislation: it needs to be clarified whether construction of a charging station for e-cars in community associations should remain classified as a "structural change", which requires the unanimous consent of all owners. In larger dwellings, as experience shows, this is rarely achieved, meaning there will be hardly any e-car owners in community associations in future...

The growing importance of the 'new' CEBIT on the threshold of the digital transformation age

The variety of topics related to the Smart Building core theme, which could be expanded to include topics such as "Smart Office", "Smart City" or "Smart Airport", has continuously grown over the past years. From consumer solutions (energy management, entertainment & communication) and networked devices in buildings (Internet of Things) such as smart lighting and heating solutions up to securing the outer skin of buildings (the wide subject of

physical security, including not only access control, motion sensors and video cameras but also smart drones for observation and control of buildings and open-air sites), the possibilities for smart solutions are numerous. They could include not only parts of the building, but even more important make using the building more pleasant and effective - this includes the private house owner, who can check from his far-away holiday location who is standing in front of his front door, as well as the millions of offices in

which employees could easily increase their performance by up to 10% simply by weather-independent lighting optimised throughout all times of the day and the year. Imagine machines (or automated equipment) communicating with each other as well as with the building, which for example automatically let fresh air in or open and close gates (which in turn has an influence on the room temperature, which automatically adjusts itself).
At the core of all smart solutions, however, are software programmes - irrespective of whether they are delivered in a box ready to use (for example LED lighting systems) or have to be individually adjusted for larger professional smart building solutions. The general concern from a few years ago, that too many different SmartHome systems could obstruct market

development, has vanished - the products of most manufacturers are meanwhile sufficiently compatible to other systems to no longer slow down market development. Also, 8-9 out of 10 employees in the development departments of manufacturers for smart building solutions are by now programmers - that is what can be heard from the market.

Smart Building could be part of many related trade fairs, such as events for professional AV solutions (ISE Amsterdam) as well as a trade fair for the construction, window or electricity industry (light + building) or consumer electronics (IFA). And it is. However, the centrepiece of every smart solution should not be forgotten:
the software in combination with the internet protocol - which, in turn, are core topics of the ICT industry as well as CEBIT.

Because market players - and also high-level politics - begin to realise way too slowly that software, unloved in Europe, has been regarded far too long as "necessary evil" and vegetated as a "shrinking violet" for the past two decades - something one would only hesitantly deal with if there was no alternative (see automotive industry). This is in stark contrast to the Californian Silicon Valley, where software has always been and still is the origin and centre of every technological development for the future. With Amazon, Apple and Google (as well as Tesla), Silicon Valley is currently taking over the European smart market, at least as far as consumer markets are concerned. Smart speakers, however, are not a SmartHome solution in the true sense of the word. Unnoticed by consumer retail markets and the masses of end customers, a large number of suppliers of specialised solutions for the SmartHome and Smart Building market has become established in Europe - from LED lighting steering systems to networked communication to physical security products and building automation solutions, where holistic-systemic building solutions create much more value (and a higher added value for the marketers) than smart retail serial products.

Cyber attacks, espionage, virtual drone pilots in warfare, fake news: software is increasingly gaining influence, to an extent that nowadays one could say that whoever rules the software rules the world - whether we like it or not. European politicians have (hopefully) recognised the backlog. The future CEBIT will demonstrate how economy and politics have supported the importance of software in a reasonable manner - from school classes to funding start-ups with great ideas.

At least Europe now finally has ministers and state secretaries for digitalisation which have long been pressed for (by trade associations such as the BVDW). Europe's presidents meet with increasing frequency to talk about nothing else than how to drive digitalisation or "digital transformation" forward. The new CEBIT in Hanover has early on become the spearhead of this new movement - and is now recognised and supported by politics as the European marketplace for digital transformation, which is supposed to demonstrate and reflect the economic development of digitalisation - maybe with the thought that Europe will finally develop a digital strategy of its own, just as China and Russia, for example, have implemented long ago. Trade associations such as BVDW or BITCOM, as the driving force of the development, are also required to contribute working together for digital transformation.

Under the umbrella of the main theme "Internet of Things", right at the probably most frequented entrance in Hall 13 (opposite of the exhibition train station "Messebahnhof" and the West car park), the new' CEBIT features the 'Center of Smart Building'- a shared platform of the 'SmartHome Initiative Deutschland e.V.' and the exhibition

agency Global Fairs TT-Messe as the organiser of the platform. Since Hall 13 ideally is home to the theme worlds of M2M, IoT, Unified Communications and IT Security as well as, in addition, the 'Channel & Distribution Area' (formerly Planet Reseller - now without clearing), the exhibiting manufacturers and specialist distributors now find a synergetic and most likely well-functioning marketplace for SmartHome and Smart Building. This is where suppliers and product-related target groups in the form of decision makers, building designers or resellers meet in an efficient way - this ist the place where they can get first-hand information about the latest smart trends and technology and also can make important contacts in this connection. Because SmartHome and Smart Building solutions (except retail and mailing products) are not directly supplied to the private or commercial final customer, but are usually distributed by specialist distributors to local resellers or system integrators and system houses, which mostly also organise training of the customer market, visiting CEBIT naturally makes as much sense for specialist distributors and system integrators as well as building planners, architects and the entire housing and building industry. Therefore the organisers of the "Center of Smart Building", located perfectly at the entrance of Hall 13 and additionally advertised all over Europe, expect a good exhibition success for everyone involved at the NEW CEBIT.

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