

ThoughtWorks presents Technology Radar in Africa

On Thursday, 18 July 2013, the first presentation in Africa by ThoughtWorks, a global Agile and Continuous software development company, of its six-monthly Technology Radar will include a discussion on 'infrastructure as code' as a means by which South African and African organisations can reduce operational risk and save significant development costs.

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Infrastructure as code is an approach that treats everything in IT infrastructure as capable of being checked into a version control system.

"This enables the automation of versioning and configuration of systems, eliminating the human error that is inevitable with manual processes," says Rachel Laycok, a ThoughtWorks lead consultant with years of experience in systems development and a member of the ThoughtWorks Advisory Board that produces the Technology Radar.

"Given the rapidity with which system and application updates and tweaks are happening, particularly in virtualised environments where a single tweak creates an entirely new version of an environment, infrastructure as code becomes a vital way of reducing risk.

"It also makes finding bugs easier. Finding, as opposed to fixing, bugs is the most expensive part of issues management in software development. So, you want to find them in development rather than at testing stage, where the cost doubles, or in production, where the cost quadruples. Finding them early also enables you to shorten development cycles."

Creation of a new virtual environment

Infrastructure as code makes the creation of a new virtual environment or a new version of the environment a matter of executing a script that can create and provision an image or a set of images in a matter of minutes.

Laycock points out that while infrastructure as code has been around for a few years, it has seen little use in South Africa - even among organisations that are keen to fully exploit agile software delivery where iterations of functionality can be delivered up to several times a day.

"In the past six months, a number of different options for treating infrastructure as code have come to the fore and we assess their usefulness in our latest Techradar. So, it's an ideal time to encourage African organisations to consider going this route."

ThoughtWorks' Technology Radar represents a practical review of emerging techniques, tools, languages, and platforms as it is based on real-world building, researching, testing, and open sourcing of technology for customer organisations by ThoughtWorks offices around the world.

The Technology Radar supports ThoughtWork's mission of championing software excellence and revolutionising IT and, over the years, has become a reference work for analysts, customer organisations, and the media.

Categories

Technologies are categorised in four ways:

- **Adopt:** The industry should be adopting these
- **Trial:** These are worth pursuing, it is important to understand how to build up this capability, and enterprises should try this technology on a project that can handle the risk
- **Assess:** These are deemed worth exploring with the goal of understanding how it will affect a customer enterprise
- **Hold:** Organisations must proceed with caution.

Trends covered in the latest Technology Radar include:

- Embracing falling boundaries. ThoughtWorks examines concepts such as perimeter less enterprise, development environments in the cloud, and co-location by telepresence
- Applying proven practices to areas that somehow missed them. Many in the industry have missed ideas like capturing client side javascript errors, continuous delivery for mobile, database migrations for NoSQL, and frameworks for CSS.
- Lightweight options for analytics. ThoughtWorks believes data science and analytics are not just for people with a PhD in the field, highlighting collaboration in which all developers understand the basics and work closely with experts when necessary.

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