



“Smart Industry is somewhat holistic; you can’t really get a handle on it.”

Peter Schepers, CEO of Itility and winner of Most Innovative ICT Leader 2014, explains his view of Smart Industry in a video interview. In it, he discusses the expected future, but also the various trends currently underway.

Smart Industry: myth, bust or life-changer?

When you think about smart industry, of course it’s a bit of a mythical concept. In terms of what it actually means, what is ‘smart’? To take an example: we can very consciously supply a city with energy, because we know how everyone uses their washing machine. If you can do it, it becomes a life-changer.

Trends in Smart Industry

Smart industry is quite difficult, because you want to be fast. You want to think of something smart, you want to do analytics and then you want to put it together, click it

together. So you have to look at trends a lot. But I prefer not to call them ‘trends’; I prefer to call it simply ‘the shop’. The shop you need to see. That can be items of analysis tools or items of software or hardware. For me, Raspberry Pi is also something that’s ‘in the shop’. And you go on from there. But of course you have to keep an eye on the shop, and ask: what’s everyone making? And every time I weigh it up: do I make it myself or does someone else make it? That’s actually the number one thing we keep in mind. Another trend we watch closely is perhaps a very special one: can we see people, communities as they’re called, who are working on this, who easily analyse something with a multidisciplinary approach? That’s what we call analytics: pulling something apart and daring to design, daring to design across all the chain’s boundaries. People wanting to create something beautiful in a short cycle, quickly. And these are people who can easily talk to other disciplines.

Future of Smart Industry

I think then that we’re still talking about Smart Industry. Because things aren’t going as fast as we might think. Smart Industry starts small, by looking at what I can do for my customers now, with the knowledge I have now. What can I improve in a long supply chain, as they so neatly put it? We’ll still be working on that in the future. We can’t really see it yet. But in fact you can actually see it: in functionalities that are being developed around us. Especially in energy management, or the smart cities we talk about a lot. Improving the supply chain. Collecting data from consumers. The automotive industry, everyone can read that. It really will come true.

Smart Industry Event

Smart Industry is a somewhat holistic phenomenon right now. We can’t really get a handle on it. But if we look at ourselves, at Itility as an IT engineering firm, we do that in miniature. So we experiment with all kinds of people from all kinds of roles. All kinds of groups have to sit together to learn. With a multidisciplinary approach, how do we make something better from what we already have? So these are gradual steps. And that’s why I think we frequently have to come together to discuss a case, to get to the nitty-gritty of it. But above all, we need to break through the barriers between disciplines. And of course a conference like the Smart Industry Event is ideal for that.

More information

During the Smart Industry Event, experts from the sector will present markers ‘for going smart’ by showing compelling examples, sharing practical experiences, and by sketching (international) developments and trends. Peter Schepers was one of the many expert speakers during the event.