

IASA Global Founder Paul Preiss Suggests Its Time to 'Professionalize Technology Architecture'

IASA Global Founder Paul Preiss made a case this week in *Architecture & Governance Magazine* that it is time to "professionalize technology architecture."

AUSTIN, TEXAS, US, February 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Paul Preiss, the founder of [IASA Global](#) – the world's leading professional association for Technology Architects, made a case this week in [Architecture & Governance Magazine](#) (A&G) that it is time to "professionalize technology architecture."



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Paul Preiss, Founder of IASA Global

In the article *The World of Architecture Needs Regulation and Professionalism*, Preiss wrote that "this is something I touched on recently at the Business Innovation Leadership and Technology ([BILT](#)) Conference, which was themed *Architecting for Good*. I have this radical belief, and have had it since late-2002, that technology, business, and enterprise architecture is a real profession. I don't just mean professional in the sense of acting correctly, but in

the sense of doctors, lawyers, and accountants. And I think the world is going to force us to professionalize it. The world is going to start looking at us for liability, ultimately.

"First, some context. One of the critical moments in the formation of this wild belief came when I read the History of the AIA (American Institute of Architects)."

Preiss went to describe how "13 architects met in the office of New York architect Richard Upjohn in 1857. Their goal: Form an organization to promote architects and architecture. That was the beginning of AIA. Two months later, AIA was incorporated. Now, we're nearly 88,000 members worldwide.

"Prior to their establishment of the AIA, anyone could claim to be an architect, as there were no schools of architecture or architectural licensing laws in the United States.

“The founders were concerned that there were too many breakdowns, mistakes, bridges that fell over due to the lack of rigor in practice, experience, techniques, and capabilities of the people calling themselves architects. This led to poor results often endangering lives, difficulties in understanding an architect’s value and a general distrust of the profession.”

Preiss asked: “Sound familiar?”

“Technology stands a crossroads. In the beginning, technology was a unique and exclusive tool for rarefied academics and automating very specific problems in the aerospace, defense and financial sectors.

Problems that had little to do with the employees or organization in any

direct way, much less the populace at large. As time as progressed, however, technology has emerged from the back of the house into the mainstream popular imagination and lifestyle. In many ways our lives are more about technology now than they are about the “real” world. Our children go to school online, our cars drive themselves, our financial future depends on algorithms. All built by the lowest bidder and designed by randomly skilled and competent individuals from across the globe.

“More than 15 years ago, I accurately predicted that software was going to impact people’s lives in a day in and day out way. It was going to impact airplanes, it was going to impact identity, security, and safety for human beings, as well as cultural issues. From corporate health, to culture, to national security, our lives and those of our children are in the hands of technologists. And for over 50 years there has been zero accountability nor understanding of how skilled those technologists are. In any other field with similar impact this would not stand. Imagine houses and skyscrapers built and designed without engineers. Imagine surgery by the unskilled. Imagine cars designed by lay people. It would be bedlam. Well after 20 years working with technology and business teams, that is exactly what it is.

“We face one unique challenge that other professions did not have to deal with; we are the world’s first profession that has to start out globally. And that is a big challenge. Most professions, doctors and building architects for example, started out in a guild model in very local ways. Even today if you are a doctor in France you are not one in the United States. Only in technology are we as likely to work with architects from all over the globe as we are someone



Paul Preiss

local, more likely in fact.

“This confusion is leading to massive abuses of the software and technology stack from vendors, corporate employers and more. In other professions there are two controls for ethical and high-quality delivery, one corporate (corporate ethics, liability, and global standards) and one is individual (certification, licenses, and personal liability). These practices make roads drivable and doctors trustworthy. And yes, they also increase costs in certain areas, but when planes fall out of the sky, when our children’s identities can be stolen, how can we allow companies to talk only about cost reduction.

“I am not talking about the average retail website though identity and security come to mind as essential minimum standards even there. I am talking about heart transplants, airplanes and are our children’s online and in person lives. And while this may sound like fire and brimstone, it is none the less true.

“This process does not have to be negative or detrimental though. In fact, if executed properly it will actually speed production of working software as well as improve quality at a lower overall cost. Right now, architectural cost is hidden behind defects post release, inability to scale, to deliver in dependable agile methods, in lost customers, and in lost revenue. These costs are hard to calculate but I recently read an estimate that we have over \$500 billion in technical debt. I believe it is much higher than that, in the trillions, when we consider the impact to customer, to business models and to overall quality delivery. Imagine a world where standards of professionalism kept an unethical practitioner or even just an unskilled one from just moving to the next employer and causing the same difficulties there. Imagine one where we didn’t have to teach employees the basics of architecture, engineering, and business. That world is not so far away, nor even that hard to reach. All we must do is embrace the same concepts and activities as our other professional brethren.”

Further discussion of this can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3ovfo8bn_4

Holt Hackney
Hackney Publications
+1 512-632-0854
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