KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA:
A CHALLENGE FOR LIBRARIANS

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Abstract—Knowledge management is the influential tool for any organizational competitiveness. Knowledge is the heart of the organization. KM improves productivity, effectiveness and competence in the facet of operations and services. Knowledge is explicit and implicit in nature. This paper deals with fundamentals of knowledge development, technology for knowledge management, leadership in internet era and e-learning systems. Knowledge has been recently recognized as one of the most important resources of organizations. The development of knowledge management in recent years has become the main concern for librarians and libraries.

Keywords—Marketing Information System (MkIS), competition, design of marketing information system.

INTRODUCTION
Knowledge Management is one of the latest topics both in the business and information research world. In our day to day life, we pact with vast amount of data and information. Data and information is not knowledge until we know how to burrow the value out of it. This is the reason we call for knowledge management. Knowledge management in general and internet-based knowledge management in particular, is one of the prime strategic directions being investigated and adopted by industries today. In the current information and knowledge era, knowledge has become a main resource. Faced with competition and increasingly vibrant environments, organizations are beginning to realize that there is a vast and largely unused asset mellow around in the organization – knowledge. This recognition not only occurs in business organizations but also in non-profit organizations such as academic libraries. However, the environment in which academic libraries operate today is shifting. Academic libraries are part of the university and its organizational culture. The role of academic libraries is shifting to provide the competitive benefit for the parent university – a factor that is crucial to both staff and students. Knowledge management is a feasible means in which academic libraries could improve their services in the knowledge economy.

However, organizations face countless challenges in fostering and managing knowledge. The challenges occur because only a part of knowledge is utilized by the organization; the other is utilized by individuals. Organizations, including academic libraries can create and leverage its knowledge base through initiation of appropriate knowledge management practices. The knowledge and experiences of library staff are the intellectual assets of any library and should be valued and shared.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE
Knowledge is a level higher than information. Knowledge resides in the minds of knower. It is a liquid mix of related structured and unstructured raw material that is transferred into important knowledge assets that can be renewed, grown, and acted upon. Knowledge is an essentially human situation of dealings, while information is what have in mindless computers. Many agree with the definition that “knowledge” is not only personal, it is also an evolutionary mental process – we originate and structure what we know. Knowledge also includes intuitive and spontaneous responses to the environment in which we find ourselves.

WHERE DOES KNOWLEDGE RESIDE?
Knowledge resided in many forms within an organization, but the primary areas include structured and unstructured information, and employee expertise.

• Structured Information – Transaction-based data managed and maintained within information systems. Transaction data is often locked away from users because it is hard to recover or amalgamate.
• Unstructured Information – Associated with documents. It includes PC, paper, video, and audio formats that are not easily accessed and shared.
• Expertise – Experience base or innate understanding of employees. Because this type of knowledge is generally detach and regularly shifting, it is hardly ever codified and moves through the organization unknowingly.
WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

Knowledge management is a collective work environment in which all idle and unrelated knowledge is systemically collected structured and dispersed enterprise-wide to support effective decision making and development of competitive advantage. The following are generally well thought-out fundamental components of knowledge management.

• Generating new knowledge.
• Accessing valuable knowledge from outer sources.
• Using accessible knowledge in management for decision making.
• Embedding knowledge in processes, products and services.
• Representing knowledge in papers, base on data and software.
• Facilitating knowledge growth through traditions and incentives.
• Transferring presented knowledge into other parts of the organization.
• Measuring the value of knowledge assets.

IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT EXCLUSIVE?

Knowledge Management is exclusive because it does more than administer and present information. It unlocks the related value and includes assumptions, experiences and insights. Earlier attempts at information management resolute on the amount of information accumulated the competency of processing, and the tempo with which an organization could move data. Legacy systems mainly stored information in separate business silos, rarely integrating enterprise-wide information. In contrast, Knowledge Management embarks on the next management border line. Knowledge management includes insights in the form of successful experiences that were never before reflected in the information technology repositories and warehouses.

HOW IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FIELDS

Knowledge Management is entrenched in many disciplines including psychology, sociology, business, economics, education, information and paper management among others. These areas have developed perspectives on the workings of individuals and systemic knowledge. Knowledge Management embraces these perspectives, but operates from the basic premise of the “sticky” nature of knowledge. That is, knowledge is enthusiastically imbedded in networks and processes as well as in the human beings that comprise and use them. For example, people obtain knowledge from established processes and routines, the sum of which is usually impossible for any one person to know.

NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

In the new global environment, an organization’s competitive potential is essentially tied to the capability to fast work collectively with customers and important stakeholders. The main distress of today is to ensure that the knowledge necessary to force critical business processes is available. A range of market factors have contributed to the growth of importance in knowledge management. It include

• Accelerated pace of change.
• Staff abrasion – especially that resulting from years of downsizing and reengineering
• Growth in organization scope – geographic dispersion associated with globalization of markets
• Global incorporation
• Increase in networked organizations
• Growing knowledge product in market.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF A KNOWLEDGE PROCESS?

An organization’s knowledge process usually includes:

• Mastering transaction data management.
• Transforming transaction data into information.
• Converting information into knowledge that can be used in decision-making.

When an organization becomes practiced in running knowledge and performs the three responsibilities for all time the organization learns. When this process achieves bunch of knowledge management begins to happen spontaneously in self-organized networks.

DO LIBRARIANS NEED MAPS OF CYBERSPACE?

Does cyberspace have characteristics? Do librarians need maps of cyberspace? What do we know about the nature, shape, size, distribution, and characteristics of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and cyberspace? Cyber maps help us imagine and understand the new digital site. Like maps of the real world, cyber maps are direction-finding tools for the new information site, as well as objects of artistic interest. Some cyber maps may look common, using the cartographic conventions of real-world maps, but many are theoretical representations of electronic spaces.

LEADERSHIP IN THE INTERNET AGE

Leading a library or information service in the Internet era is absolutely a dare with all the new strategies,
skills, and technologies swirling around. We hear the cry from higher-ranking management, “It’s all on the Internet, and it’s free.” So how do those of us leading our enterprise strategies with respect to the Internet, intranets, and the effective world show the impact of our key competencies on our organizations and gain support to further our organization’s goals and strategies? This session deals with key leadership strategies for the Internet era—a necessity for all Internet librarians.

INFORMATION LITERACY: TODAY AND TOMORROW

The field of teaching information literacy has been growing steadily, spreading to different parts of the world and to different education, business, and economic sectors. Initiatives in knowledge management, lifelong learning, and distance learning and a speedily growing, information-savvy world population have stimulated demand. Sheila Webber launches this forward-thinking track with a picture of key developments and another view in the field.

INFORMATION LITERACY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The fast growth of electronic resources has increased the requirement for information literacy programmes and distance education programmes have added special demands. Developing online courses at a distance is even more difficult. Training users in a cross-cultural environment and techniques for developing online courses require special understanding to cultural differences, according to Diane Clark’s experience in a collaborative project. Facing a different challenge, Margaret Markland describes how lecturers in UK colleges and universities are unilaterally selecting and presenting active links to online information resources for their students. She discusses some of the difficulties and how library and information professionals can help the teaching society.

E-LEARNING SYSTEMS

E-learning can be defined as learning using electronic means: the attainment of knowledge and skill using electronic technologies such as computer- and Internet-based courseware and local and wide area networks. E-learning refers to using electronic applications and processes to learn. E-learning applications and processes include Web-based learning, computer-based learning, practical classrooms and digital teamwork. Content is delivered via the Internet, intranet/extranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV, and CD-ROM E-Learning, focuses on the individual’s acquisition (or rather construction) of new knowledge and the technological means to hold this construction process. Simulations close to the actual world are the answer to constructivist learning theories, demanding situated learning with a high degree of appointment of the learner. Learning process can be seen as a process for:

- acquiring information;
- acquiring information and processing experience;
- acquiring information and processing experience that effects a long-term change in the awareness of the learner;
- acquiring information and processing experience in which the learner integrates new information and experience into his/her current knowledge base;

TECHNOLOGIES FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Keeping up with the pace of change is a dare for most librarians and information professionals. Get up to speed with the latest developments in this stimulating one-day crash course on new trends and technologies. Whether it’s PDAs in the reference room, network safety, or the nuts and bolts of information management, the speakers in this track are sure to open your mind and make bigger your horizons.

The concept of KM would be less influential for organizations without knowledge oriented technologies. Technology’s most important role in KM is extending the reach and enhancing the speed of knowledge transfer. Knowledge engineering, digital networks, the internet and intranets are not KM but only enabling technologies for managing knowledge. KM technology enables users to simultaneously access internet sites, databases, intranets and other internal/external resources as if the information existed in a single location.

INTRANET AND EXTRANET

Fundamentally, intranets/extranets are phenomenally powerful tools to streamline library services. Information disseminated on an intranet enables a high degree of coherence for the entire library because communications are consistent. By giving information seekers and information providers the ability to access time critical information, intranets improve the decision making process by empowering individuals with the knowledge necessary for faster and better informed decision making. Intranets allow the centralization of information which makes it easier to maintain and keeps data up-to-date.

Both intranet and extranet provide a facility where people can publish information electronically on library web pages. It is accessible by anyone in the organization who has access to the net. It also contains information on the work being conducted within individual sections and often includes details of current projects, results of previous projects and sometimes home pages of individuals involved in the project. Intranets and extranets fit into the bigger picture of KM.
TECHNOLOGIES THAT SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The following diagram reflects the main technologies that currently support knowledge management systems.

These technologies roughly correlate to four main stages of the KM life cycle:

1. Knowledge is acquired or captured using intranets, extranets, groupware, web conferencing, and document management systems.
2. An organizational remembrance is formed by distillation, organizing, and storing knowledge using planned repositories such as data warehouses.
3. Knowledge is distributed through education, training programs, mechanized knowledge based systems, professional networks.
4. Knowledge is applied or leveraged for further learning and innovation via mining of the organizational remembrance and the function of expert systems such as decision support systems.

THE FUTURE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

In the next several years ad-hoc software will develop into comprehensive, knowledge aware enterprise management systems. KM and E-learning will converge into knowledge collaboration portals that will efficiently transfer knowledge in an interdisciplinary and cross functional environment. Information systems will change into mock intelligence systems that use intellectual agents to modify and filter appropriate information. New methods and tools will be developed for KM driven E-intelligence and improvement.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Knowledge is ever-growing right from the discovery of human civilization. Knowledge content processes and contexts all need to be vigilantly managed to protect for formation of value added knowledge and circulate. KM is to be included with strategic management of the organization for building competitiveness. With the eve of ICT, it has become ever dynamic in nature, which has to be managed effectively for storing and service. Library acts as the major storehouse of human knowledge. With the implementation of modern technology with computers telecommunication and net working. Librarian act as the Knowledge Manager who classifies, preserve and disseminate knowledge from creator to knowledge seeking community irrespective of location and distance. Since the quality service is the aphorism of the present Librarians, hence providing value added knowledge is the key factor of the Librarians for building competitiveness in the modern era.

REFERENCES


