

# Lecture 14: Introduction to Knowledge Communication and Sharing

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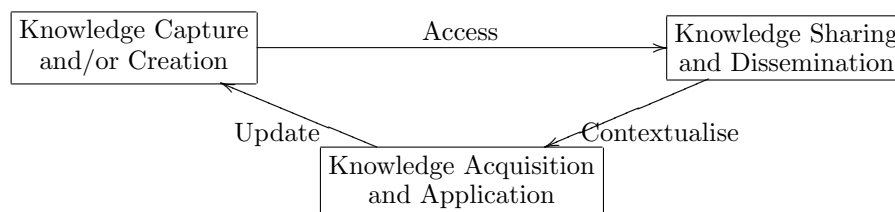
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## Contents

### 1 Explicit and Tacit Knowledge Sharing

#### Knowledge Sharing in KM Cycle

- After knowledge is captured or documented, it has to be shared.



- Technology offers a new medium through which employees who share similar professional interests, problems, and responsibilities can share knowledge.

#### Information and Human Focus in KM

- Desmarest (1997) contrasted two approaches in KM:

**Information-Based** : focus on representing, codifying, documenting knowledge.

**Interaction-Based** : focus on people, connecting knowers.

- Information-based emphasise explicit knowledge, favours externalisation.
- Interaction-based emphasise tacit knowledge, knowledge-sharing.

### **The cost of not finding information**

- Feldman (2004) study (International Data Corporation) estimates that knowledge workers spend 15–35% of time on searching information.
- They succeed in less than 50% of the time.
- Organisations with 1000 employees loose around \$6 million p.a. for time lost in searching for information.
- Cross and Parker (2004) found that knowledge workers spend more time re-creating existing information.
- There is a surprising decline in productivity despite investment in IT (Productivity paradox).

### **The cost of not finding information**

- Excellent Intranet Cost Analyser  
[http://www.dack.com/web/cost\\_analyzer.html](http://www.dack.com/web/cost_analyzer.html)

### **People as Preferred Knowledge Sources**

- It is not surprising that we often prefer people as the source of information and knowledge.
- Most common justifications are:
  - Information is obtained faster
  - The source is credible or trusted
  - Learn how to reformulate the query
  - Follow up queries

## **2 Social Nature of Knowledge**

### **Communities of practice**

**Definition 1** (Community of practice). A group of people with common identity, professional interests, and who share, participate and establish a fellowship.

- CoP may share electronic or virtual workspace, such as a part of the organisation's intranet.
- CoP can be facilitated by e-mail lists, user groups, discussion boards, wiki, community yellow pages and other forms.
- Many organisations have CoPs

### **Social network analysis**

- Social network analysis (SNA) is aimed at measuring and mapping the relationships and information flows between people in CoPs.
- SNA typically involves the use of questionnaires and/or interviews.
- SNA can also use statistical analysis, data- and text-mining techniques in complex networks.
- SNA's output can be a visual representation (a graph) of the network.
- SNA can reveal patterns of interaction in CoPs (e.g. average number of links between people, subgroups, information sources, sinks, bottlenecks).

### **Obstacles to Knowledge Sharing**

- Knowledge is seen as property, and ownership is important.
- Credit should be given and authorship maintained where possible.
- Knowledge workers are often rewarded for what they know, not what they share.
- Incentives should be provided for knowledge sharing.
- Uncertainty in understanding knowledge by the recipient.
- Uncertainty in credibility of the source.
- Organisational culture influences knowledge sharing.

### **Additional Reading**

1. Wang and Noe (2010)  
Knowledge sharing: A review and directions for future research
2. Willem, Buelens, and Scarbrough (2006):  
The role of inter-unit coordination mechanisms in knowledge sharing: a case study of a British MNC

## References

- Cross, R., & Parker, A. (2004). *The hidden power of social networks: understanding how work really gets done in organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Desmarest, M. (1997). Understanding knowledge management. *Long Range Planning*, *30*, 374–384.
- Feldman, S. (2004). The high cost of not finding information. *KM World*, *13*(3).
- Wang, S., & Noe, R. A. (2010). Knowledge sharing: A review and directions for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, *20*, 115–131.
- Willem, A., Buelens, M., & Scarbrough, H. (2006). The role of inter-unit coordination mechanisms in knowledge sharing: a case study of a British MNC. *Journal of Information Science*, *32*(6), 539-561.