



## IPKM: Inter-Personal Knowledge Management

### **Conversations with David Gurteen**

#### ***Knowledge networker, Gurteen Knowledge***

*Prepared by Carol Butler, AOK Archivist*

*Note: The asynchronous nature of online discussion groups can be confusing, as the reader often encounters several unrelated messages between one question and its reply. The Star Series discussions at AOK are a rich resource for those of us interested in knowledgework. In appreciation for all that our guest moderators and fellow AOKers do to make these discussions so interesting, I attempt here to create an archival record that feels more like a face-to-face conversation. All contributions to this Star Series conversation are reproduced below in their entirety, but the order has been modified to create a smoother narrative. – Carol Butler, AOK Archivist*

More information about this and other Star Series discussions can be found at the AOK website (<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/stars.html>).

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*About the Archives. A sentence or two from most messages has been highlighted in blue to make it easier to scan the document for a [quick overview of the entire conversation](#). Most messages contain 2 Subject lines. The first **subject line** was provided by an AOK editor, and appeared in the subject line of the message delivered to members; the last subject line was written by the person posting the message and appeared within the text of the message. Long signatures have been reduced to the **poster's name**.*

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Date: Sun Feb 15, 2004 10:52 am

**Subject: IPKM: Welcome David Gurteen**

**From: Jerry Ash, founder and chief executive, Association of Knowledgework (AOK)**

**Subject: Welcoming David Gurteen, STAR Series Moderator, February 16-27**

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STAR Series with David Gurteen  
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Hi Everyone.

Please help me welcome David Gurteen, our volunteer STAR Series moderator for the next two weeks. David is internationally known as a knowledge networker and I think I may be the first to announce that he has just been added to Debra Amidon's E-100 network, numbering him among some of the world's leading thought leaders.

Unlike many of us on the soft side of KM, David has worked for 30 years in high technology, the last 10 years as a consultant who helps people and organizations be more creative and innovative and to work more effectively with each other to make their collective knowledge productive. Regardless of his technology foundation, he is very much on the soft side!

David is the publisher of the Gurteen Knowledge Website <<http://www.gurteen.com>>, a free online resource of over 3,500 pages containing book reviews, articles, people profiles, an event calendar, inspirational quotations, an integral knowledge-log and more on subjects that include, knowledge management, learning, creativity, innovation and personal mastery. If you have not deliberately gone there you have probably been sent there by your favorite search engine. David Gurteen, like knowledge itself, is ubiquitous!

For more background on David, please go to:  
<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/gurteen.html#Bio>

My invitation to David included the suggestion that he consider Personal Knowledge Management (PKM) as his opening thread. Over the past year, David has been one of a handful of KM specialists to begin focusing on the "other end" of knowledge management -- knowledge work (PKM). David also favored that theme but said, at least for now, he has begun to refer to it as IPKM (Inter-Personal Knowledge Management) to emphasize that PKM was all about the exchange of knowledge among people, not between people and machines. In his opening thoughts, David says:

"Most people equate PKM to PIM (Personal Information Management). They talk about it in terms of personal competences and as being able to do such things as use a search engine effectively and handle e-mail overload. They think in terms of personal tools. Like KM, the term PKM has been 'hijacked' to equate to technology and tools!!"

Please review the rest of David's opening remarks at:  
<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/gurteen.html#IPKM>

Now, David, I welcome you to this space. We are very much aware of the value of your gift of time and thought and we thank you for it. Don't we everyone? Give David a big welcome and help us get this discussion off to a great beginning!

Thanks.

Jerry

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Date: Sun Feb 15, 2004 11:46 am  
Subject: **IPKM: Can We Agree on What PKM Is? - Jerry Ash**  
From: **Jerry Ash**

Subject: Already PKM Thinkers Have Seemingly Different Definitions

Hi Again, David.

In your opening remarks <<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/gurteen.html#IPKM>> you gave deserved credit to Denham Grey and Steve Barth for their PKM savvy.

Denham Grey, principle, Gray Matter Inc.  
<<http://denham.typepad.com/km/2003/12/pkm.html>>

Steve Barth, editor & publisher, KM Magazine  
<<http://global-insight.com>>

Both are members of AOK and I hope they will join in on this conversation. In their temporary absence, here's what I find Denham saying on his blog:

"In many ways, my unease with PKM parallels my thoughts on the paradigms that focus on individual competencies rather than social learning. For me, the greatest leverage and largest promise in "knowledge work" comes from the social aspects. I find this to be a fundamental distinction and thus often see myself at odds with the PKM camp on many fronts."

He goes on to examine several PKM principles with that view in mind.

Steve Barth headlines his own PKM Web site with the title "Self-Organization." Below in smaller type, "Personal Knowledge Management for the Individual and the Enterprise" appears. In the manifesto that follows, Steve says:

"I'm calling this work 'self-organization' because it lets me make three key points about personal knowledge management: that you don't have to be organized to be effective; that these days the 'self' is the basic organizational unit; and that self-organizing systems are the nature of professional teams and communities today, and therefore the foundation of knowledge work."

So there you go. [Already the leading thought-leaders on PKM have one thing in common -- they aren't sure they like the name -- and they are already on the defense \(offense being the best defense\) on what exactly it means.](#)

There's more to confuse me -- your opening remarks send me to a statement by Tom Peters:

"Personal Knowledge Management (PKM) is about taking a personal or individual perspective to Knowledge Management rather than an organizational or corporate one.

"PKM is a smorgasbord of principles, concepts, disciplines and tools that we can all apply as 'knowledge workers' in the new 'knowledge economy' to help improve our ability to meet our personal and business objectives.

"In short - Personal Knowledge Management is taking responsibility for what you know, who you know - and what they know." More at:

<<http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/x00028452>>

Being on the cutting edge sure isn't easy, is it? I think the first order of business in this discussion is for all of us to find out just exactly what we're talking about. If we can't get on the same page with the same definition, at least we can know why we see it differently.

David, how do you see it? Have you written your own personal definition yet? The elevator speech? Can we reach a consensus on what we are talking about over the next two weeks?

This should be a great dialogue. I'm excited! Let the discussion begin!

Jerry

P.S. I just love the way PKM is bringing the simple term "knowledge work" back to the surface (It was the "knowledge worker" Peter Drucker first spoke of 50 years ago!). From day one, AOK has attempted to focus on the "work," not the "management." Very gratifying!

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 5:08 pm

Subject: FW: IPKM: Re. Can We Agree on What PKM Is? - David Gurteen

From: David Gurteen

Subject: Can't define PKM, but maybe define the two camps.

Hi Jerry

Delighted to be here :=)

I wish I had a good personal definition for PKM or an elevator pitch but I do not :=(

I started out a few years ago using the term to contrast a more people oriented KM to the traditional corporate or enterprise KM that thought of KM in terms of IT systems! But today I think that 'definition' of PKM is inadequate. And other people have used the term differently.

Can we reach consensus over the next two weeks? Honestly I doubt it. People are still at odds as to what KM is after 7 or more years never mind PKM !!!

I see a parallel here - one camp sees KM being about explicit knowledge and IT while others see it as being more socially oriented and about people.

On the other hand [one camp sees PKM being about personal tools and skills and what I would term personal information management while others see it being about how individuals relate to each other and how they works with other people.](#)

[I'm in the second camp on both scores.](#) Denham is also clearly in that second camp. I'm not so sure about Steve - to me he seems to be in the first camp with leanings towards the second :=)

Of course it is not that one view is right and the other is wrong. Both have their place - we need both. I think we may just be arguing over what constitutes knowledge!

Maybe we should start by more clearly defining the two PKM camps or maybe there is just one camp that covers a broad spectrum and we look at the extremes. Then when we have got the definitions a little better sorted we can then think about appropriate labels.

So lets talk some more and see where the dialogue takes us ...

David.

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Date: Sun Feb 15, 2004 8:01 pm

**Subject:** [IPKM: Community of one? - Denham Grey](#)

**From:** [Denham Grey](#)

Subject: Community of one?

(Apologies for misspelling Denham's last name in my first post -- Jerry Ash.)

Greetings David,

[Interested to explore your concepts around 'interpersonal KM' as relationships, networks, connections, trust and community inquiry seem to be the sweet spots for knowledge creation.](#)

Steve Barth makes a case for being a member of a community of one as "each of us is the center of our own universe." I find this line of thinking difficult to agree with and give some reasons and alternatives in this new blog post

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/community\\_of\\_on.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/community_of_on.html)

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 5:18 pm

**Subject:** [IPKM: Re. Community of one? - David Gurteen](#)

**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: Don't see Denham's and Steve's Views are Substantially Different.

Hi Denham,

Just read Steve's article for the first time and must say that I pretty much agree with what he has to say .... in your blog you go on to make some interesting points with which I also agree ... I don't quite see where your difference of opinion lies :-)

\* You may need to copy and paste this long URL into your browser window:  
[http://www.kmworld.com/publications/magazine/index.cfm?action=readarticle&article\\_id=1686&publication\\_id=1](http://www.kmworld.com/publications/magazine/index.cfm?action=readarticle&article_id=1686&publication_id=1)

For example you say ...

"Personal reflection is a poor substitute for testing & emergence in dialog ...."

I'd agree and I'm sure Steve would but I'd also add that personal reflection has its place - we learn from both. I find it hard to separate the two. I have a conversation with people - I listen to their perspectives - I try something out - I observe what happens and then I personally reflect on it and integrate it with what I know :=)

To be effective in 'managing my knowledge' surely I need BOTH skills.

Where I would agree is that many of us spend far too much time in reflection - inside our heads going around in circles - rather than engaging with other people - outside our heads and getting some real stimulation :=)

You also say that Steve makes the case in his article for mastering 'mundane'(PKM) tools and techniques before individuals can really contribute to community knowledge practices - also later that a PKM tool or exercise hardly makes sense as knowledge is emergent in practice and dialog. I can't find in the article where Steve talks about PKM tools and techniques other than in his closing paragraph which is just a small part of the overall article :=)

To me he seems to be saying that we need all the community stuff that you talk about but that at the end of the day we need to put things into our own perspective - that "ultimately we have to take our enhanced understanding away from the group to act on decisions, to present at client meetings, to write reports in our cubicles" and hey we need some tools for that!

Maybe its that my birth sign is Libra - Librans tend to see both sides of an argument - but I really cannot see that you and Steve are substantially different in your views!

David

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 5:58 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: PKM - Personal Effectiveness? - Lilia Efimova

**From:** Lilia Efimova, member of scientific staff, Telematica Instituut, Netherlands

**Subject:** PKM - personal effectiveness in a knowledge-intensive environment?

Dear David, Jerry, Denham and others,

For me there are two sides of "PKM discussion": (1) understanding what do we mean by PKM and (2) finding out a better label for it. I'd like to touch both of them.

1. For me, like for Jerry, the value of PKM discussion is in bringing attention to knowledge work, to the role of the individual in KM. This does not mean neglecting community and conversations, just stressing that there is a personal side next to social.

I do not have a good definition yet (hope to have at the end of my PhD research :), but to give it a try:

-- [personal KM is about being aware of conversations you engage in \(both actively and by being exposed to as a lurker\), relations that enable them, and ideas that you take from and bring into these conversations](#) --

I tried to visualise it as a model (<http://pkm.notlong.com>), thinking of PKM as an intersection of three spaces: me, others and ideas.

2. I do not know a good label for it. David linked to some of my attempts to find it: the latest one is "personal effectiveness in a knowledge-intensive environment," but I'm still not happy with it.

May be it's worth to invite AOK readers for a brainstorming: conversations help finding words to address ideas that we are trying to articulate :)

Lilia Efimova

<http://blog.mathemagenic.com/>

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 5:15 am

**Subject:** IPKM: PKM Not 'Anti-Social'; but Knowledge Doesn't Need Social Validation - Steve Barth

**From:** Steve Barth

**Subject:** PKM Not 'Anti-Social'; but Knowledge Doesn't Need Social Validation - Steve Barth

Thanks to David Gurteen and Lilia Efimova for bothering to read my recent KM World column all the way through. [The point of the '3,000 Engineers' story was not that there](#)

were 3,000 ‘communities of one,’ as Denham Grey misunderstood. The point was that there were 3,000 communities of 3,000. Hypothetically, each of those communities contains the same members. But each member can only perceive and participate in the community from his or her own point of view. Your version of the network is different from your neighbor’s because yours has you in the middle, not your neighbor in the middle.

You may need to copy and paste this long URL into your browser:

[http://www.kmworld.com/publications/magazine/index.cfm?action=readarticle&Article\\_ID=1686](http://www.kmworld.com/publications/magazine/index.cfm?action=readarticle&Article_ID=1686)

## DEFINING PKM

There have been many definitions of PKM offered since ‘The Power of One’ appeared as a KM Magazine cover story in 2000. The article introduced just a few of the people considering what KM looks like from the individual’s perspective.

<http://www.destinationkm.com/articles/default.asp?ArticleID=615>

While I agree that PKM is as unsatisfying a term as KM, I am perfectly happy that people define it so differently. Most of them are looking to explore the implications of combining those three little words and they cover more ground this way. For his part, Denham has gotten a lot of mileage out of critiquing a view of PKM based on his own, intentionally narrow definition; he is the only one suggesting PKM is antisocial.

Knowledge work is clearly more collaborative than ever, but I argue that this puts more responsibility on the individual, not less. Productive collaboration doesn’t just happen by itself. The social and professional competencies you bring to the group, from the mundane to the sublime, amount to network citizenship in the knowledge age. How you interact with the team, how you share and learn, negotiate emerging norms and generally help to make sense of unfolding events is ultimately your responsibility.

Meeting deadlines is your responsibility too. You have to be both efficient and effective in how you access, evaluate, organize, collaborate around, communicate and protect both information and ideas. I think this is exactly what Lilia means by ‘personal effectiveness in a knowledge intensive environment.’ Precisely because of this, a knowledge worker’s competencies include things like team building, listening skills, emotional intelligence, etc., along with ‘mundane’ things like information literacy and touch typing.

Productive collaboration cycles between people working in parallel and then working serially. Neither learning nor innovation are inherently productive events themselves unless they become recommendations, designs, decisions or actions and these steps are often assigned to individuals to carry out or pass along.

If it seems like I harp on the individual stuff, it's because someone has to. If you talk about knowledge work (rather than knowledge management) you have to be willing to get your hands dirty. Any real day in the life of a knowledge worker is an undifferentiated mix of learning, sharing, relating and reflecting, along with reading, filing, searching, typing, trashing and so on. Dialogue can't happen if you can't find the phone number. Dialogue is pointless unless someone has been given a problem to solve or a question to answer. Dialogue is as self-gratifying as solitary navel-gazing if participants aren't bringing in ideas and information from outside the circle.

#### GROUPTHINK LEADS WHERE?

The duality of organism and organization has been debated by priests, philosophers, poets and plumbers for thousands of years and isn't likely to be solved in midnight posts to an eGroup. Individuals need the group and the group needs individuals.

Community, collective or cultural sense-making are important, but I wouldn't be as quick as others to discount the importance of individual reflection in learning, knowing, discovery and innovation. This is one of the few things that 1000 years of poets and plumbers seem to agree on. For one thing, if you aren't reflecting on what you hear in conversations, chances are you aren't adding much to the discussion.

Moreover, to say that knowledge always must be socially validated is an extremely dangerous idea. Who are we talking about? Society 'validated' knowledge that the earth was flat, that witches cursed Salem, that Jews ate babies, and that the world would be safer if we invaded Iraq. On the other hand, Galileo's theorems did not need validation from the church. Gandhi's non-violent protests didn't wait for social validation from either English or Indians. Countless pioneers in hundreds of fields instead endure ridicule before their knowledge is accepted. Does that make it something other than knowledge?

Steve

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 9:53 am

Subject: **IPKM: Re. PKM - Personal Effectiveness? - David Gurteen**

From: **David Gurteen**

Subject: Agree, PKM is fundamentally about knowledge \_work\_.

Hi Lilia,

I totally agree ... "the value of PKM discussion is in bringing attention to knowledge work, to the role of the individual in KM. This does not mean neglecting community and conversations, just stressing that there is a personal side next to social."

I also love some of the thoughts and ideas that you have been blogging on PKM for some time now.

In particular, your recent comments on Steve's article:

<http://blog.mathemagenic.com/2004/02/16.html#a1089>

Like you, I do not understand "why Denham contrasts personal and social sides in PKM instead of looking for synergies between them" - and I am looking forward to his perspective on this :=)

I like your model too, though have yet to think deeply about it ...

[I agree with you and Jerry, PKM is fundamentally about 'knowledge work' and getting things done effectively.](#)

In that sense I like your label "personal effectiveness in a knowledge-intensive environment" from a descriptive point of view even if, like you, I dislike it as a label :=)

David.

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 5:38 pm

**Subject:** [IPKM: To Leverage Knowledge, Start at the Beginning - Jim McGee](#)

**From:** **Jim McGee, Director**, Huron Consulting Group, adjunct professor of technology industry management, Kellogg School of Management, Evanston/Chicago, U.S.

**Subject:** Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 318

[For me the bias in favor of a personal approach to knowledge management grew out of my disappointments with the organizational approaches to knowledge management that I'd seen.](#)

Organizational approaches start from the value of knowledge assets to the organization and seem to either go down a coercive path with the coercion more or less disguised or go down an incentives/marketing path that attempts to persuade knowledge workers to part with their knowledge in exchange for something.

While I agree with Denham on the importance of social interaction to creating useful organizational knowledge, I think it is important to start at the personal level and work up, rather than work down from the organizational level. Given that, I wonder whether IPKM isn't getting a little too clever. Aren't we better off if we fix the starting point first, moving it from the organization to the individual, before we move on to a likely end state?

Jim McGee weblog: <http://www.McGeesMusings.net>

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 9:50 am

**Subject: IPKM: Re. To Leverage Knowledge, Start at the Beginning - David Gurteen**  
**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: KM won't work unless people are intrinsically motivated.

Hi Jim,

- + yes coercion is never going to work and corporate approaches seem to take the approach of "How can we make them share their knowledge!" Doomed from the start!
- + Air mile schemes and rewards of various sorts (bribes!!! :-)) also don't cut it for me.
- + Knowledge workers are only going to really meaningfully share if they are intrinsically motivated to do so - they see the rewards for themselves.
- + I think you are right, maybe IPKM is too advanced a stage to start and that we need to get down to the personal level.
- + For me as I say above, [KM is never going to work at any level if the people involved are not intrinsically motivated to make it happen](#) - in that sense it is deeply personal and was what got me thinking and talking about KM a few years ago when I saw many KM corporate initiatives fail for lack of buy-in from the people

David.

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 11:52 am

**Subject: IPKM: Re. To Leverage Knowledge, Start at the Beginning**

**From: Dave Pollard**

Subject: Social Networking Overtaking KM on the Internet

I'm in complete agreement, as usual, with Jim McGee, when he says we need to build IPKM "from the personal level up, not from the corporate level down". Although it's heretical and pisses off a lot of people in KM, [we need to realize that most of what gets accomplished in business gets done \\_in spite of\\_, rather than because of, the systems and processes and tools that we foist on knowledge workers.](#) This is simply a reflection of Drucker's brilliant insight that knowledge workers today (for the first time in the history of commerce) know more about their individual, specialized jobs than their supervisors or bosses. Why then should we be surprised that they know what they need more than we do, and that what they need should be personal, and different from what the guy in the next cube needs?

That's why I believe:

[IPKM = Personal Information Management + Social Networking](#)

and why I would define it simply as "the acquisition, organization and sharing of personal information". That's not anti-social or uncollaborative, it's simply a recognition that what we each do is unique, and even more importantly, the way we do it is unique.

Yesterday on my weblog I wrote an article called "Personal Content Management: An Exploration" <<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/2004/02/18.html#a632>> . It's an attempt to design, at least at a high level, some tools for the first part of the above equation, Personal Information Management. There are already quite a few Social Networking applications out there, and while they're not very good, the fact that they're getting so much buzz ('social networking' is now appearing in new posts on the Internet almost twice as often as 'knowledge management') indicates an awareness of their importance, and I expect they will evolve quickly to become tools that powerfully connect people to people and to others' personal content.

Because they take Jim's "personal level up" approach, I believe these tools, unlike KM 5757tools, are going to be very popular with knowledge workers.

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 3:02 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Knowledge As a Social Act - Denham Grey

**From:** Denham Grey

Subject: Knowledge as a social act

Much of our difference here may spring from our assumptions and mental models concerning the very nature of knowledge itself. My emphasis (and preference) for group / community activity springs from an appreciation of knowledge as 'socially constructed'.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_construction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_construction)

Our 'knowledge' is so situated, emergent, tacit, and distributed that we all have a real hard time getting to grips with it. **My theme is: 'you need others to critique and dialog with, to assist you with knowledge creation, learning and awareness'.**

This leads to a strong empathy for networking, building relationships, engaging in creative abrasion - in preference to - self-reflection, organization of inner thoughts, management of personal information. A focus on group more than individual processes. Just don't see the most effective route to knowledge being via introspection in your cube.

In an idealistic way, **I just do not think the 'what's in it for me' (wiifm) approach is a productive way to promote understanding, learning, or knowledge sharing** - it is the wrong premise and it puts up subtle mental blocks even before you start the journey.

My argument is not that PKM is anti-social - rather a PKM focus is not the most 'effective' way to work with knowledge - you need those 'community' partners & flow, more than you need personal information skills and fast retrieval. Not saying you do not

need competencies -- typing and the like -- but am voting for 'social' empathy, a networking bias and a community ethos as being the key ingredients.

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 1:36 pm

**Subject: IPKM: re. What's In It Can Be Intrinsic Value? - David Gurteen**

**From: David Gurteen"**

Subject: Re: What's in it for me?

I'd like to pick up on the following paragraph in Denham's recent post where he says :

"In an idealistic way, just do not think the 'what's in it for me' (wiifm) approach is a productive way to promote understanding, learning, or knowledge sharing - it is the wrong premise and it puts up subtle mental blocks even before you start the journey."

I agree but was reluctantly convinced by Ron Young a year or two ago that we really only do things when there is something in it for us. However, with a subtle twist. That something may be a tangible reward but more often it is just the good feeling that comes from doing something that you enjoy; doing something well; doing something to help another person or doing something in a way that you know is effective - all regardless of the lack of tangible rewards.

I love the work of Alfie Kohn on the subject of rewards see here if you are not familiar with his work ...

<http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/x005277ae>

in particular take a look at his book "Punished by Rewards" and his emphasis on the importance of 'intrinsic' motivation rather than "extrinsic". See:

<http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/x0025299e>

I'd be very interested in other people's views on this subject.

David

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 1:32 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Re. In Search of a Word - David Gurteen**

**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: Re: IPKM: Knowledge As a Social Act - Denham Grey

In response to Denham;'s recent post - I think I am in danger of repeating what I said in earlier mail - its not clear to me that I or others have any huge disagreement with his views.

To me "PKM" or "IPKM" or whatever we call it encompasses the social element that you emphasis - I also agree that it should be the focus - its the more important element.

In browsing the web for "PKM" material in the past I have found a number of commentators who see "PKM" purely as a collection of personal information management tools. It is clearly these views with which you and I disagree.

So the more I think about this - the more the problem is in the label. We need a new label that encompasses all the ideas that have been discussed in these last dozen postings or so.

Do people agree with me here?

On the subject of labels - I think they can get in the way as we try so hard to keep them both descriptive and short which means that they are wide open to misinterpretation. I sometimes think we should just make up a new word which has no existing connotation.

Do any ideas of you have a suggestion for a label even a temporary one that we can use to help facilitate this discussion as try as I might nothing comes to mind that I feel comfortable suggesting :=)

David

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 6:39 am

**Subject: IPKM: Threats of Trust, Silence, Blame - Bob Bater**

**From: R J Bater, principle associate, InfoPlex Associates, Bristol, UK**

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 318

David,

You gave a talk on Knowledge Cafés to the Aslib Knowledge and Information Management Network (KIMNET) in London last December. In your talk, you quoted Martin Buber as saying 'The origin of all conflict between me and my fellow-men is that I do not say what I mean and I don't do what I say.'

I have since come across other references to this issue, which I see as being related to the need to establish trust relationships if knowledge is to be shared interpersonally. For instance, I read another quote, from John Kenneth Galbraith this time, which went:

"When faced with the choice of changing one's mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everybody gets busy on the proof."

Another colleague drew my attention to an item in a blog (<http://www.featurelength.com/node/view/7>) entitled 'Could silence be threatening even our strongest organizations?' which described how many of us feel distinctly

uncomfortable when talking to our peers, let alone those above us in the hierarchy. I certainly detected something of myself in this piece.

There seem to be a number of barriers to overcome before IPKM can become effective. Have you any observations to make or advice to give on this issue?

Bob

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 9:47 am

**Subject: FW: IPKM: Re. Threats of Trust, Silence, Blame - David Gurteen**

**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: Learning to Listen and Learning to Tell the Truth

Hi Bob,

I talk a great deal about the role of conversation and dialogue in knowledge management - my talk last December to ASLIB was on just that and the role of the knowledge cafe in bringing people together to talk and reach a deeper understanding of the issues facing them ... if you recall I spoke about "learning to listen" and "learning to tell the truth."

I have a short article on my website on the subject that people might like to read ...

<http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/x000fa4ca>

How do we encourage each other to learn to listen and tell the truth ... to talk openly ... I have no magic bullet ... my London knowledge cafes were partly in response to this - to get people talking about issues they cared about and to learn from those cafes about the approaches that work best ....

Knowledge cafes - whatever - forums where people can talk openly without fear of losing face or being ridiculed, where their perspectives are listened to and where they learn to talk and listen openly I think have a major role to play.

What else? I'm not too sure. Parents and adults certainly have a role in our upbringing. There is nothing better a parent can do for a child then take the time to listen to them and respect their opinions.

Anyone else got thoughts on this issue?

David.

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Date: Mon Feb 16, 2004 2:28 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Philosophical Differences on Knowledge Focus - Dave Pollard [+Jerry Ash]

**From:** Dave Pollard, former CKO, Ernst & Young, and our next STAR Series moderator!

**Subject:** Resisting 'submission' of personal knowledge to massive central repositories

Hello, AOK members. I'm delighted that David has chosen IPKM as his opening topic for this month. As many of you know, I left Ernst & Young LLP last month after 27 years, nine of it as CKO Canada and Global Director of Knowledge Innovation. My job was to keep E&Y on the leading edge of KM, continuing to win awards for what we actually implemented. In recent years I had become increasingly frustrated because E&Y management was ideologically wedded to centralized Knowledge Management and the need for 'submission' (the choice of word alone is telling) of personal knowledge to massive central repositories which had become increasingly irrelevant, devoid of critical context, and hopelessly cluttered.

The model I had proposed was a three-level one that I think is very compatible with what David is calling (for now, anyway) IPKM:

1. Development of **Personal Content Management (PCM, sorry for adding an acronym) -- tools** (with weblog-type functionality but simpler and more transparent) and processes that would allow individuals to organize their own business content (and that they've collected and kept from others) in a way that enables them to use it, share it 1-on-1 and mine it effectively. Organized the way the *user* wanted it. These PCM tools would also enable each user to decide which content could be shared with whom (a personal 'permissioning' system).
2. **Metadata tools** -- tools invisible to the user and working in the background which would, subject to 'permissions', reorganize and reindex each individual's content to make it more useful to others.
3. **Social Networking applications** -- very easy-to-use tools that interface with the personal content through the metadata tools to enable the identification of relationships, the making of connections, the transfer of information, and ultimately even collaboration and other more dynamic interactive applications of connectivity (i.e. transactions). These applications would harvest and mine the content residing on personal machines, and have no content of their own. They would operate on a just-in-time basis. These tools might include an Expertise Finder, a Connector, a Super Address Book, a Network Builder, a Publisher, and a Subscriber.

I've described and diagrammed these layers and tools, and provided an example that might clarify how they would work together, in this recent weblog post:

<<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/2004/02/05.html#a615>>

With that context, I think of IPKM as (at least potentially) **the sum of these three layers**. I sense most knowledge workers are in fact already 'voting with their feet': They are

opting out of centralized KM processes in favour of peer-to-peer content sharing (where they can provide and receive context with the content). They are using some of today's rudimentary, early Social Networking apps to share what they know with *outsiders* effectively and enthusiastically. Meanwhile the awkward, context-free internal KM tools designed to share with those inside the organization fall into disuse unless coercion is applied by senior management.

When I talk to people about IPKM I get two diametrically opposed reactions: Front-line knowledge workers love it and want to know when it will be available. Senior management, and many traditional thinkers in KM and IT, are horrified, seeing it as risky, anarchic, and a threat to their control. What about 'organizational knowledge' and 'organizational learning', they say? My answer, with which I think Drucker would agree, is that there never was and never will be any such thing.

Sorry for the length of this first post. I'll try to be briefer in future. And I'll leave the task of deciding what to call IPKM to the marketers in the group. /-/ Dave

[Jerry Ash -- Don't apologize for a long post when it is chock full of quality thought. The STAR Series isn't a chat room; it is a place for in-depth collaborative thinking that can produce a valuable archive, articles and even books. We like substance regardless of length. Ramblings are something else again :-)]

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 3:12 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Philosophical Differences on Knowledge Focus - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

Subject: Agreeing with Dave Pollard, with Some Reservations

Hi Dave,

Have empathy with your words:

"I sense most knowledge workers are in fact already 'voting with their feet': They are opting out of centralized KM processes in favor of peer-to-peer content sharing (where they can provide and receive context with the content). They are using some of today's rudimentary, early Social Networking apps to share what they know with outsiders effectively and enthusiastically. Meanwhile the awkward, context-free internal KM tools designed to share with those inside the organization fall into disuse unless coercion is applied by senior management"

People seem to love PKM and dislike CKM ... PKM empowers them, CKM manipulates and disempowers them!!!! [hmm interesting my spell checker offers 'disembowels' as the correct spelling of 'disempowers' :=)] Yes a sweeping generalization but one in which I think there is a lot of truth. People do not like to feel that they are being manipulated.

I like your idea of levels and your model but I am sure you would agree it is only part of the picture - the technology part. We still need to integrate the face to face social stuff.

I do have some reservations, though, about personal content management -- I have a neat little tool that I developed in Lotus Notes for storing and tracking all sorts of tidbits of information ... I have just started to use it again after 12 months of it lying idle as I found I was spending all my time manipulating the content and no time actioning it ... there is a lot of dross that we just do need to store or remember ... it can take more time to categorize and store it as it does to find it in a cluttered workplace. After a month I am thinking of dropping using it again ... :=)

I think what we need is a single conceptual model that encompasses all aspects of KM - CKM and PKM, technology and people.

What do others think ?

David.

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 11:38 am

**Subject: IPKM: Applying Rigid, Semi-rigid Processes to Dynamic Thought - Paul Cripwell**

**From: Paul Cripwell**, president, J.P. Cripwell Associates, Ontario, Canada

Subject: Thoughts on applying rigid and semi-rigid processes to dynamic thoughts

Thanks to David for being here.

I have read the recent posts and am worried about a growing trend as technology develops and overtakes more of our lives.

There are many recent mentions of "capturing" knowledge, either personally (blogs, etc), or corporately (the E&Y, and many others).

This trend to offload the information into systems designed to assist the thinking process, may be deleterious in the long run. From my perspective, when I offload something into a system, I tend to forget it, because I know it is saved somewhere (and I can find it!)

Things like phone numbers, addresses etc are easily placed in customer management systems, but it is all the little details that I can never place anywhere.

Things like, my uncle only reads email about twice a week, my dad can't receive html codes, are just the tip of a HUGE iceberg of tidbits, that (IMHO) will defy coding in the long run.

One of my most important business possessions is my business card file. I have tried scanning and entering all these into a database, but without success. I have come to realize that there is more valuable information in the card itself.

For example, the position in my book gives a general topic, but more importantly there is a certain chronological order, and nearby cards were received at the same time, maybe that could be important. The picture of the card often triggers the general circumstances of where I got it, and sometimes the face of the person.

IMHO all these new applications for loading and storing information (not knowledge) may only make matters worse, storing vast amounts of forgotten knowledge, but being ultimately irretrievable (E&Y case in point).

While they may have their place, such PKM applications should not be seen as an ultimate solution (though I think few in this column would think so!), but rather as a possible tool to aid in situations where the individual user might find them of advantage.

For myself, I prefer the random musings and interrelationships created in my brain, as various stimuli are received. Please let us not ignore, or downplay, this most critical piece of human anatomy and behaviour.

Cheers  
Paul Cripwell

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 2:21 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Workers Approach Different Problems Differently - Dr. Kirby Wright**

**From: Kirby Wright, assistant professor, University of Alberta, Canada**

Subject: Routine problems get individual approach; novel problems involve collaboration.

As a first time contributor I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important discussion.

I bumped into the concept of PKM when I was engaged in my doctoral dissertation in which I explored work and learning processes of 'expert' workers (with expertise being socially situated - determined not by role or position but work performance and recognition from fellow workers).

Knowledge work essentially involves solving problems (a view supported by Wiig [Karl Wiig, <<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/wiig.html>>] in an earlier discussion). I found that workers applied different approaches and different skills as they faced different types of problems. While I acknowledge the arbitrariness of the distinction, I found that workers typically addressed problems that could be identified as routine, novel, discovery and problems outside of expertise.

Routine problems, which could also be complex, were typically handled individually; workers had the skills, experience, pattern recognition processes to address them individually.

Novel problems (which includes the last three types) typically involved both collaboration in the solving of the problem and the need to seek new sources of information and insight from explicit sources (libraries, Internet) and from communities and networks.

To make a long post shorter, [I found that these workers all had well developed personal knowledge management processes in place](#). Their PKM approaches were contingent; impacted by the type of problem they were working on. [In my opinion, PKM exists: it is part of the repertoire of the knowledge worker. I suggest that one's effectiveness \(level of expertise\) may be, at least, partially impacted by their PKM skills.](#)

I would also add that PKM is much more than an individual skill set. In order to be effective, particularly when addressing novel problems (which is where knowledge workers add the most value to organizations) collaboration and team work is required. As well - as has been discussed extensively within AOK - the role of networks and communities of practices is essential.

Two final thoughts. I suggest that one way to consider PKM is to consider that a worker need to integrate three components: cognitive (eg. problem solving skills); information (the capacity to search, assess and apply information) and social (collaboration, community of practice and networks). All of these coexist within a supportive organization environment (framed within a social capital perspective).

Finally, for me, PKM must enter all of our discussions around KM. PKM answers the essential change management question that every individual worker asks 'what's in it for me.' Unfortunately KM is still primarily based on an organizational 'knowledge-leverage' model (the what's in it for me as a senior executive manager priority).

Thanks

Kirby Wright

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 2:53 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Workers Approach Problems Differently - Jerry Ash

**From:** Jerry Ash

Subject: "PKM already exists." Bravo. There is a big difference between what people are supposed to do and what they actually do.

To Dr. Wright and all.

I usually try to stay in the background and leave it to members to drive the Dialogue, but one of Dr. Kirby Wright's observations brought me to the forum. He said:

"In my opinion, PKM exists: it is part of the repertoire of the knowledge worker."

Bravo! While writing and editing "Stars of the NEW ORDER: What They're Telling Business Leaders," which is based on the first two years of the STAR Series, the view finally came clear to me that [the force behind KM is not a new management strategy, but rather a new environment in which management must now work](#). I called it the "New Order," and explained that the big event has already happened! Armed with modern methods of research, learning, communication and networking, people are no longer content to be blindly led at home (where they make personal decisions) or at work (where they have always engaged in personal decision-making regardless of protocol).

In the book's conclusion -- which is written in the collaborative words of the 14 Stars and 42 participants featured in the book -- I wrote this:

"It is the practice of people -- what they actually do -- that brings process to life and breathes life into process. We all know there is a big difference in what people are supposed to do in their jobs compared to what they actually do. It was always true. People at work have covertly used short cuts, informal communications, bootleg files and a whole host of guerrilla tactics that help them work better regardless of protocol. The New Order of the Knowledge Age will allow them to get out of the stealth mode and into overt initiatives that are endorsed and encouraged by colleagues and management."

Kirby, you and I (and a lot of other vocal AOKers) are definitely on the same page!

Jerry

P.S. A Sneak Preview of the book -- containing the Introduction, a couple of chapters and the Conclusion -- can be downloaded as a PDF at:

<http://www.kwork.org/Book/book.html>

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 3:07 am

**Subject: FW: IPKM: Personal leads to Collective - Jack Vinson**

**From: Jack Vinson, Ph.D., Knowledge Jolt, Inc., Chicago, U.S.**

Subject: Personal leads to Collective

What a great start to the discussion!

Dave Pollard describes something I have been thinking for a while, but just haven't figured out how to articulate. We need to help knowledge workers be effective with their own body of knowledge and then find the best ways to help them interact with other knowledge workers and /their/ personal systems. We have to look at both the tools and

the behaviors around those tools, whether the tools be "technology" or the more prosaic ink-on-paper notebooks. When I talk to people about this, I get the reaction of "I really need that!" I also get "Is that possible?" and "Is there a market for that?" when I suggest that a business could be built around personal effectiveness training and consulting.

I have been discovering recently -- being unemployed / just starting a new business -- that working with people sharpens my brain. [I need to interact with people to get my own juices flowing. In fact, I tend to do more personal reflection when there are more people around \(physically or virtually\) who help me see myself in a new light.](#)

Regards,

Jack  
<http://www.jackvinson.com>

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 4:33 pm  
**Subject: IPKM: Re. Personal leads to Collective - David Gurteen**  
**From: David Gurteen**  
Subject: After an event, my mind is spinning.

Hi Jack (Vinson),

"In fact, I tend to do more personal reflection when there are more people around (physically or virtually) who help me see myself in a new light."

I laughed out loud at this ... [I am exactly the same](#) ... after a networking day in London or after a conference or workshop - my mind is spinning ... I often can't sleep through too much reflection ... :=)

And taking part in this discussion these last two days - my mind has never been far from the subject ... just silently mulling over the issues and points - often while I am doing other work - kinda mental multi-tasking :-)

David.

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 8:45 am  
**Subject: IPKM: Personal Effectiveness Good Starting Point - Andy Boyd [+Jerry Ash]**  
**From: Andy Boyd, VP KM, Royal Dutch Shell Group, Holland, Netherlands**  
Subject: Personal effectiveness seems a good starting point to me.

Hi all.

I'm a friend of Lilia Efimova and have been involved in KM for some 10 years now. You may need to copy and paste the following URL into your browser:

<http://www.knowledgeboard.com/cgi-site/whoswho.cgi?action=detail&id=12193&authorid=440236>

It seems to me a good hook for all of this is how we as individuals work in the networked era. [We have to know the methods of knowledge sharing \(what seems to work and what seems not to work\) and also when personal problem solving \(reflection\) is better, and when collective debating is better.](#)

We see more and more here in industry of our learning professionals building modules helping our people discuss deviate and try out these KM processes. We have a lot to improve on with these modules, but we do recognise the skills to be a savvy operator in the 21st century are subtly different from those needed in the 20th.

We are lucky as we are building from a case where by and large we make KM work collectively, and have a long standing commitment to an individual learning program within Shell. We also have eager beavers on the management teams and in the workforce, plus teams who can deliver effective KM.

[The question for me is if the personal effectiveness definition has some merit how and what processes, techniques etc can be utilised.](#) Watching how individuals operate within our KM systems (albeit we don't call them KM - but that debate is not for here) is always highly instructive (and I agree there with Jim McGee on getting the roots right and the rest can come later), we see a whole variety of personal styles techniques and preferences all of which work for that individual. A menu option of proven ideas (pick n mix for those Brits amongst us) seems better than a rigid definition.

It also strikes me it would be dangerous for those who tried collective KM and failed to suddenly try personal KM; it seems to me one should lead eventually to encompass the other, as both are needed to sit together to truly add to your company.

Looking forward to listening in and joining occasionally the debate.

[Jerry Ash -- I want to welcome a brand new member to AOK membership. Andy's just the kind of member I like -- contributing in the currency of KM -- knowledge!]

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Date: Tue Feb 17, 2004 3:17 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Personal Effectiveness Good Starting Point - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

Subject: No One Method Fits All

Hi Andy (Boyd),

Dave Pollard says in his weblog ... "In an earlier post I stressed the importance of allowing each individual to maintain and organize their own content and their own networks their own way."

And you make the point :

"We see a whole variety of personal styles techniques and preferences all of which work for that individual. "

I think this is fundamental to PKM that the individual has a "smorgasbord" [although a Britt - I use a Scandinavian metaphor :- )] of tools and techniques to help them work effectively ... everyone is different when it comes to the way they micro manage their work and their information ... there is no one way suits all.

Also agree with your words:

"It also strikes me it would be dangerous for those who tried collective KM and failed to suddenly try personal KM; it seems to me one should lead eventually to encompass the other, as both are needed to sit together to truly add to your company."

We need a single concept not two :-)

David.

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 12:19 pm

**Subject: IPKM: System Optimization Integrates Contributions - Bob Parden**

**From: Bob Parden, professor, Santa Clara University, CA, U.S.**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 321

How about old-fashioned "systems optimization" which is today the integration of the contributions of participants in value-added chains.

Bob

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 3:21 am

**Subject: IPKM: Yes, Personal Choice but within Limits - Andy Boyd**

**From: Andy Boyd**

Subject: Hi David - yes personal choice but within limits

The issue for us corporate types is that too much self determination and expression leads to chaos. Believe me we've been there and in the corporate world that costs a lot of money -- we are expensive beings by our very nature.

We have a whole host of KM working methodologies but within a defined number of processes (Tangents within a framework is the name I like to use - and old book about Led Zeppelin but you get my drift I guess)

It must be linkable, scaleable and easy to use, we find our users (very smart people) are a little sheep-like in this sense -- once a good working protocol develops in a few, most of the rest will hear about it and follow. This then becomes the accepted overall process, but by the nature of things there are still a few ways to skin the cat within this framework. So diverge in the early years, then follow the masses as they coalesce on a good working process, then embed it and replicate (allowing small changes in the replication as you go from one group -- say engineers -- to others -- say lawyers.)

Corporate employees don't want complex systems they want an easy to use tool that satisfies 80% of their needs, a tool can be complex if it your main activity i.e. SAP for finance people, and they use it multiple times per day. KM processes do not require, nor should they, many interaction per day -- we need to cater for the majority of our users who come along once a month.

The issue for many is how to prompt the diverging stage to know when and where to converge, luckily (well it was not luck but hard work and lots of smart ideas from our people) that is in the past for us.

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Date: Wed Feb 18, 2004 4:39 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Yes, Personal Choice but within Limits - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

Subject: First skill of knowledge worker is to take responsibility.

Hi Andy (Boyd),

I take both your points - the first about the dangers of too much self determination and the second about knowing when to diverge and when to converge.

On the first point, yes if everyone is selfishly trying to do their own thing then you are in danger of chaos but at least in our conservative UK culture I see the opposite - people who are blind to the fact that they can choose to take responsibility. People who will moan to each other about a problem but not see that they do not need any permission to pick it up and solve it. Everyone points the finger - its not their job. [I think the first 'skill' of a knowledge worker is to "take responsibility"](#).

On the issue of divergence and convergence - its more about personal judgement and personal discipline. If you feel that you are developing a product that will fail in the marketplace for any reason - then it makes sense to make a 'noise' about it. If its just that you have a personal preference for doing things a different way to everyone else then thats not acceptable. Only you as an individual can make that call. Yet another two 'skills' that a knowledge worker needs to master if they are to be effective :=)

David.

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 3:36 am

**Subject: IPKM: Reconciliation of Corporate Types with Knowledge Types - Jerry Ash**

**From: Jerry Ash**

Subject: Comparing our vision with Andy Boyd's reality.

Hi All.

The juxtaposition of this Dialogue with my recently completed conclusion to "Stars of the New Order" has really brought a perspective to my head that is the product of three years of STAR Series Dialogues. Here's another snippet with relevance to the current discussion (remember these are the collaborative words of AOKers) :

"The organization that genuinely reorganizes its philosophy to build an environment of initiative and collaboration will find a change in employee culture occurring rapidly because learning and sharing is in the DNA.

"Human beings are social animals. Creative thinking and knowledge sharing comes naturally to us as children, but it changes with our formal education process where we begin to learn it is unwise to share. For example, we learn only some children get good grades in art class, and so, they are the only ones deemed 'artistic.' These misconceptions are enhanced by organizations that place 'creative' people in marketing, communications, PR and advertising and don't welcome ideas from the whole. People in direct contact on a daily basis with customers and competitors probably have more strategic wisdom than the decision-makers back at the office.

"The common misconception has too often been that employees have limited or narrow capabilities, are untrustworthy or even disloyal. And yet, no one's goal in life is to do a mediocre job at a company they hate. In fact, most want to do a terrific job on meaningful projects at a company they care about and with people they like. This is the potential power behind empowerment and trust. We want to -- some of us even need to -- trust and have the freedom to act both independently and collaboratively. When reward systems and department funding are designed to create competition between and among employees, it becomes nurture vs. nature, and most organizations have been inadvertently nurturing mistrust and knowledge-hoarding for as long as they have had the Industrial Age mindset. Too often, organizations take big people and put them in little boxes, held apart by steel girders, then give them a half-written script and expect them to play a role. And, the minute they start to be themselves, their script is stuffed in their faces with the demand they get on with their assigned role.

"But in the right environment, enterprising is as natural as breathing. People do it to survive and succeed, individually and collectively. Knowledge not shared is useless. If one individual is the only one who knows 'this train is going to crash' and that person is

on the train, keeping it secret is pointless. If not on the train, keeping it to one's self is unconscionable. In the perfect New Order model, managers are valued not because they are in control or know more than their staffs, but because they can quickly communicate the things they do know and get staff members to do the same with each other. Leaders build environments of trust and mutual respect where creative contribution is nurtured and employees at all levels understand that being successful in this networked world increasingly requires collaboration, both vertically and horizontally."

Now I'm comparing these words with those of Andy Boyd and wondering why our vision is so different from Andy's experience:

"The issue for us corporate types is that too much self determination and expression leads to chaos. Believe me we've been there and in the corporate world that costs a lot of money -- we are expensive beings by our very nature."

For the moment, I'm thinking that the gulf between the vision and the reality is filled with the culture we have created over the past 150 years. [A sudden shift to trust and empowerment is bound to lead to chaos if it is not done methodically and carefully while the transformation in corporate and people culture has a chance to make the adjustment. And I don't think anyone is suggesting that we should turn over the keys to the company safe. Sometimes I think we scare the dickens out of management by suggesting that KM or PKM requires a total dismantling of hierarchy.](#) In my view, hierarchy will always be required to manage tangible corporate assets while KM and PKM are used to leverage human capital. I realize there is heated disagreement over the coexistence of hierarchy and individual self determination, but if it is either-or, then we will never get where we want to go.

The reconciliation of "corporate types" with "knowledge types" is key.

Keep up the great conversation! Jerry

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 8:08 am

**Subject: IPKM: Tree of Knowledge Is Deciduous - David Hawthorne**

**From: David Hawthorne, president, HCI, and academic adviser, NYU, U.S.**

Subject: Let's call it "Bob."

The Tree of Knowledge Is Clearly Deciduous

Living with paradox is difficult, but there you have it. Very little of original knowledge (like good military plans) survives its first encounter with experience. Humans are constantly patting themselves on the back for how much they know, rather than admitting how much of what they "know" at any given moment is just plain wrong. I suppose that labeling it helps discussion. If we can distill a complex idea down to a simple label, we can agree about the "thing" we are discussing and thereby deal better with its detailed "complexities." (Isn't it remarkable how often this strategy fails? It seems we're still

debating the both the "K" and the "M" in KM and now the I and the P in IPKM. The best thing about the debate, nonetheless, is all the really good issues that surface without ever settling the precursors (pun-intended :-).

I was once editor and publisher of a magazine named "Millimeter." It was a publication for the motion picture and television industries. In the late nineteen-seventies we decided to adjust the balance of our emphasis from "film" to "television" -largely because there was so much more advertising revenue available from the "electronic technologies." Market research had told us that our title "Millimeter," was off-putting to advertisers of electronic gear. In the US, television is measured in inches -videotape was known by its width-in-inches, TV screens were know by size, measured diagonally in inches, and so we actually engaged in the ludicrous consideration of changing our name to "Inch." By the time we had argued it ad absurdum with red faces all around, I finally announced my decision: "We will call it "Bob." Everyone knows "Bob" and everyone likes "Bob," so it will be "Bob." There was stunned silence. People were frozen in their postures. Finally, I laughed, and quickly the tension left the room. Of course I was kidding. It's an old joke. So we kept "Millimeter" and the market adjusted anyway and within a year's time we became the nations leading motion picture/television industry magazine in "ad pages" from "electronics companies." What's the moral of this story? It's that [what we know \(understand\) is deciduous anyway. It will change to accommodate new realities, new conditions.](#) The tree doesn't die. Leaves were not a mistake, but a condition of existence. Trees have not "evolved to become leafless," they just shed their leaves as part of the on-going process of adjustment.

It seems to me that David and others are quite right to raise the issue of "interpersonal knowledge management" at this juncture and in this context. Not that PKM is diminished by it in anyway. Like many others who have commented, most of us seem quite prepared to accept the idea that IPKM and PKM are two aspects of the same thing (oh my God, I can feel the tug of the "K" and "M" discourse, but I will resist.)

[The mother-load in this discussion seems to me to go toward what it takes to change the institutionalized, entrained, accepted, and largely unconscious social practices that humans live by while trafficking in what they know.](#) Under prevailing practice, we use so little of what we know and the "information age" has made our ineptness apparent. It's as if we have been playing tennis with baseball bats. (Imagine such a game, and imagine that the rules of tennis, as we know them, had instead evolved in a game where rackets were large wooden cylinders. The rules would be quite different, would they not?)

Along comes some person with a the paddle-like strung racket we are now familiar with and introduces it to the game. What happens? First, there is the bitter argument about "ruining the game." Then there is the "but it's not tennis" phase and then, as time wears on and the strung racket gains acceptance, the rules are changed to accommodate the innovation. In time, people forget there ever was a predecessor game and it's few remaining artifacts are thought to belong to something called "batnet" played by an ancient failed culture.

The key to understanding the process is not reflection or introspection but "letting go." The world will not spin out of control if we give up the notion of knowledge ownership -- an absurdity enshrined in law. We have learned, in most cultures, to give up the idea of "ownership of humans." Can we entertain the heresy of "giving up ownership of ideas" even if we disguise it as "intellectual property." In an environment where "intellectual interaction" has reached the pitch it has today, how can anyone claim to have "invented" anything? It is a foot race along a path paved with money that leads to the patent office where one person, or one group of persons can lay claim to owning an idea whose emergence was shared by many if not all.

David introduced this discussion with a question about "trust." I think that may, indeed, be the central issue. How can there be "trust" in a society where someone can appropriate something from another and literally take legal possession of it? Isn't it odd that "legal possession" in modern society is more secure than "physical," "actual," or "brute-force" possession?

There is a great deal of discussion in KM circles about "best practice." Clearly, we need to change our focus to "letting go" of "bad practice" rather than adopting "best practice." We will wind up throwing out some very deeply rooted "beliefs." It will be extremely stressful (so says both experience and "dissonance theory") But the main obstacle I see to progress in KM is that it is at odds with what has become a "basic instinct" - to own and thereby prosper disproportionately by laying spurious claim to "knowledge." The idea that we would stop thinking, learning, and acting because we couldn't patent its fruits is ridiculous. Much has already been said in this discussion that suggests "thinking" and "learning" regularly occur without "profit aforethought." (All of which makes me more sympathetic to IPKM -or "Bob," as we might call it- because, at the end of the day, it boils down to figuring out "who" benefits, "why" and "how" from social engagement and organization.)

-David Hawthorne

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 8:14 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Learning Happens on Three Levels - Mark McElroy

**From:** Mark W. McElroy, CEO, Macroinnovation Associates, LLC, and president Knowledge Management Consortium International (KMCI)

**Subject:** At the PKM level, Individuals can learn to think clearly/critically.

David and All:

David wrote:

"I love the work of Alfie Kohn on the subject of rewards see here if you are not familiar with his work ..."

I love Kohn's work, too. Really good stuff. There's a closely related body of work that we rely heavily upon in the 'New KM' school of practice that deals with intrinsic motivations to learn. The short moral of that story is that organizations should spend less time on imposing extrinsic motivational programs for learning and more time on supporting intrinsic ones.

With regard to what Denham had to say versus others, I think the dichotomy or dilemma emerging here is a false one. Learning occurs at multiple levels of scale, with nesting and interactive relations between them. Individuals learn within groups, and groups learn within organizations. And all three interact with one another in their respective learning cycles. It's not either or, it's both and all of the above.

Thus, there is much that can be done to enhance the quality of learning at the level of the individual, just as there is at the levels of the group and the organization. Individuals, in particular, can learn to think more clearly and critically as they try to sort through competing beliefs and claims. [I think one of the more powerful PKM interventions in organizations, then, would be to provide training on how individuals can apply argumentative logic and how to recognize and avoid argumentative fallacies.](#) It works for me!

Regards,

Mark

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 7:22 am

**Subject:** [IPKM: Brain Tools & Techniques - Piers Young](#)

**From:** Piers Young, freelance knowledge management researcher, London

**Subject:** Brain Tools & Techniques

Hi and thanks for letting me in on such an interesting discussion!

Denham suggests that "Much of our difference here may spring from our assumptions and mental models concerning the very nature of knowledge itself." He may well be right - he often is ! :) - but I think it's also possible to have a useful conversation without directly talking about personal or public knowledge.

Let's assume that no-one really knows what knowledge is. Let's say KM/PKM/IPKM is 'about' performance optimization. (It's less glamorous than knowledge I know!) Whose or what's performance are we trying to improve? At whatever level, I think we're agreed, it has something to do with the brain. [We're trying to improve the performance of brains, both individual ones and grouped ones. And their performance levels are symbiotic.](#)

I think Dave (Pollard)'s three level structure is definitely on the right track. There are 'brain' tools and techniques to improve the performance of both individual and grouped

brains -- individuals' use e.g from meditation to backs of envelopes to PDA's and so on. [I think I'd say one of these optimization techniques concerns connecting with other brains, or what you might call "sharing knowledge." As Jack (Vinson) and David (Gurteen) have mentioned, brains start to buzz after a bit of sharing, and that's a good thing!] Grouped brains use e.g team-building exercises to libraries, communications courses, portals and collaborative software.

Critical to both sides (individual and group) performance is the "interface" the arcs to the brains' nodes. Dave's metadata tier is one such interface, David suggests, while critical, it is IT-biased. It deals with one flavour of brain tools. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but if we duck the "knowledge issue", and focus on brains, then the need for cultural support for this interface might become a little clearer. Issues like valuing employees 'brains', giving them some "brain down-time" (people solve problems better after a sleep!), making it clear why connecting your brain is a "good thing" for both individual and group, all affect the performance of the system as a whole and the individuals in it.

Erm. Anyway, that was one effort at synthesis, but it may not be at a particularly practical level - sorry if it was too long!

[Note to Piers: Of course we appreciate an economy of words, but not an economy of thoughts! Thanks for the thoughts. -- Jerry Ash]

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 12:10 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Article in Today's Guardian

**From:** Dave Pollard

Subject: Article in Today's Guardian

Although it might be like letting the fox into the chicken coop, I thought I would bring to your attention [an article in today's Guardian by Jack Schofield](#), blogging from the O'Reilly Conference, entitled Blogging Business. [It takes shots at KM and suggests the use of blogs \(whose functionality I have proposed as a starting point for Personal Content Management tools\) in business would be a lot more productive than the KM tools currently available.](#) He then goes on to say:

"Most knowledge management systems are far too user-hostile to inflict on ordinary people. If they are installed, most of the victims won't use most of the functionality."

His arguments are a bit over the top, but I tend to agree that, as the architects of most of the KM systems in place today, we're now part of the problem -- they've become legacy systems and our pride of ownership prevents us from seeing how ghastly some of them really are.

The story can be found at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1150675,00.html>

Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 12:15 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Knowledge Working Competencies? - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

Subject: Knowledge Working Competencies?

I am interested in "knowledge working competencies" - "[What do we need to know and do as knowledge workers to be effective?](#)"

TFPL, a UK company has a KM competency framework see :

[http://www.tfpl.com/resources/competency\\_dictionary.cfm](http://www.tfpl.com/resources/competency_dictionary.cfm)

Its quite useful but I am looking for something a little less abstract.

For example, I am running a 1-day workshop in London next week -- see --

[http://www.unicom.co.uk/events/event\\_details.asp?productid=1275&catid=1&subcatid=1004](http://www.unicom.co.uk/events/event_details.asp?productid=1275&catid=1&subcatid=1004)

in which I am trying to introduce the participants to a range of tools, techniques and ideas to help them become more effective. Agenda items include:

- + [personal networking](#)
- + [conversation and dialogue](#)
- + [knowledge sharing and trust](#)
- + [learn before, during and after ... after action reviews](#)
- + [storytelling](#)
- + [creativity and innovation](#)
- + [flexible working](#)
- + [weblogs/knowledge logs](#)

What are people's thoughts on this? What sort of competencies do we need? What sort of tools do we need to know about? What sort of behaviours do we need to develop? In particular what are the few core skills that are required?

As you can see from the above I am more interested in the inter- personal skills than in technology skills. Though clearly, to say effectively use a search engine or e-mail is important too.

David.

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Date: Fri Feb 20, 2004 4:53 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Knowledge Working Competencies? - Denham Grey

**From:** Denham Grey

Subject: Re: IPKM: Knowledge Working Competencies? - David Gurteen

David Gurteen asks:

> "What do we need to know and do as knowledge workers to be  
> effective?"

Following on a theme, [I would like to suggest the key practices are ways to engage in deep dialog and knowledge augmentation:](#)

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/knowledge\\_augme.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/knowledge_augme.html)

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/knowledge\\_compe.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/knowledge_compe.html)

And it certainly helps to adopt an ecological metaphor:

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/km\\_the\\_ecologic.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/km_the_ecologic.html)

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Date: Fri Feb 20, 2004 12:43 pm

**Subject: IPKM: The Meaning of Knowledge - David Gurteen**

**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: The Meaning of Knowledge

In Denham's recent posting on knowledge competences - the first competency in a page from his blog :

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/knowledge\\_compe.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/02/knowledge_compe.html)

is:

1) Wrestle with the meaning of knowledge until you feel & understand it.

I feel I have been wrestling with the meaning of knowledge for the last 7 years or more - my view of it seems to change in subtle ways all the time ... I can put it into words if I have to try to explain it to other people but for my own purposes I don't feel the need to - what ever words I use just do not seem to capture its essence and I am happy(ish) to live with its fuzziness.

Too often in discussions I see people argue about some aspect of knowledge management where to me the root of the argument is in their different views of what constitutes knowledge - there is no real difference of opinion. At times like this I feel there is a very real need to agree on a definition. But in any discussion that I have been involved in where people have tried - it seems to me that agreement is impossible.

So Denham's words stuck a chord. Understanding knowledge is about wrestling with it over a long period of time and maybe you will never get to totally understand it but you should get a better feel for it :=)

Who have influenced my views the most - the KM bloggers!!

David.

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Date: Thu Feb 19, 2004 12:06 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Re. Philosophical Differences on Knowledge Focus - Dave Pollard**

**From: Dave Pollard**

Subject: Can't change people, their processes or behavior.

David Gurteen commented on my earlier post that he thought I was placing too much emphasis on tools and technology and not enough on people, processes and behaviour. To that I plead guilty. After ten years as CKO at E&Y, supposedly the definitive 'codification' KM organization, it has become abundantly clear to me that, at least in large organizations, you cannot change people, their processes and their behaviour. The best you can hope to do is ensure they are clear on their goals and roles, and equipped with the best possible tools to do them, and then stay the hell out of their way.

For that reason I have always seen KM (and also see IPKM) as an infrastructure role, more naturally aligned with technology than with HR, learning, or marketing. What E&Y people told me, over and over, was that:

1. The intermediated research, analysis and 'community of practice' facilitation services we provided were time-saving and valuable, but these functions could be done better if they were decentralized to the business units instead of being part of a separate Center for Business Knowledge, and
2. The tools and repositories we developed and managed centrally were generally of negligible value -- people found the tools unduly complex, the content largely useless, and people generally obtained the knowledge they needed more quickly and effectively (and with better context) by social networking (one-on-one conversations) than by searching or browsing centralized repositories with over-engineered tools.

And this is an organization with two dozen KM awards to its name. I belong to a small group called the Toronto KM Consortium, and its members tell me their experience (at least off the record) has been largely the same.

So [after pontificating for a decade about KM being about 'culture change'](#), I've changed [my tune](#). I believe the sooner we realize that [it's an infrastructure role, not a culture change role](#), and start providing our people with simple, personal content management and social networking tools, the sooner KM, or whatever we choose to call its successor, will start regaining the lustre it has lost.

Jack Vinson may be right that 'Personal Effectiveness Training' would be a good start. However, the more I think about this, the more I suspect that if bright people are saying they aren't able to use the tools and knowledge that have been provided to them effectively, that's more likely to be the fault of the tools than the fault of the front-line people.

[Note from Jerry: Back to my mantra -- it's not about changing people; it's about adapting to a change in the environment that is a fait accompli and that has already unleashed the power of people in the New Order. The task for management is to celebrate it. Nourish it. Capitalize on it by giving people room to manage and release their own knowledge potential. ]

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Date: Fri Feb 20, 2004 2:53 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: What would we do without our tools? - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

**Subject:** What would we do without our tools?

In Dave Pollard's recent post he says:

"So after pontificating for a decade about KM being about 'culture change', I've changed my tune. I believe the sooner we realize that it's an infrastructure role, not a culture change role, and start providing our people with simple, personal content management and social networking tools, the sooner KM, or whatever we choose to call its successor, will start regaining the lustre it has lost."

It reminds me where would I be if it were not for my tools? :

- + my pc, my laptop, my pda
- + my phone; my mobile phone
- + my broadband internet connection
- + my webcam
- + my web-browser
- + Google
- + my website and weblog
- + e-mail
- + instant messaging
- + Yahoo groups
- + my calendar
- + my address book
- + my community database (10,000+ people in 125 countries)
- + my home-brew Lotus Notes applications to organize all my personal content
- + and oh yes I had better not forget all my 100s of books! ( I can still remember when you did not buy a book - you borrowed it from the library :=) )

Have these changed me? Have they changed the way that I work; the way that I think and the way that I behave? And the way that I relate to people?

YOU BETCHA!

What's the route of that change? Its got be that [these technological tools have allowed me to CONNECT with people and ideas around the globe that a few years ago was utterly impossible](#). Write a monthly knowledge-letter and distribute it each month to 10,000 people in 125 countries for next to nothing; establish relationships with many of these people; work with them learn from them; meet them when I visit their countries and when they are in the UK. Publish my ideas through my website and weblog and make connection with like minded-people doing the same and learn from them. Run my face-to-face knowledge- cafes in London (this would be impossible without e-mail and my website to coordinate it). Have a group discussion with people all over the world like we are doing now.

WOW! I'm chuckling away to myself here as I think about it. Chuckling with pleasure that I am doing this and taking it for granted. Its all crept up on me slowly!

[So yes Dave is right - infrastructure is important - very important but it is only an enabler](#). We might be making good use of it and changing our behaviors but many other people are not. As Dave says maybe the tools are too difficult for them to use but I suspect its more a mind-set and intrinsic motivational issue. You have got to want to learn and do new things and you have got to understand that the way forward is though the new technology and the recognition of the importance of social networking.

David.

[Note from Jerry: David, you remind me of our new puppy we just got at the opening of this Dialogue. Zoe is so exuberant, she virtually explodes every morning to greet a new day! May we all have the zest for life of a pup who greets discovery with such enthusiasm! Life is grand.]

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Date: Fri Feb 20, 2004 6:32 pm

**Subject:** [IPKM: Catching Up on The Week - John Barrett](#),

**From:** John Barrett, principle, ITI Associates, AOK EZine writer/editor

Subject: Catching Up on The Week

Welcome David and thanks for kicking off this most interesting discussion. Unfortunately I've been otherwise occupied and just now had a chance to read all the posts for the week. So, not only is this longer than I would like, but I'm afraid some of my thoughts below are more relevant to items discussed earlier in the week.

While not at all cast as a book on KM, I believe Galdwell's "Tipping Point" has a lot to offer by way of examples for our current discussion. As I recall, those who both had

knowledge (Mavens) and networks (Connectors) were able to getting things "tipping" the best. Add to that persuasion (Salesmen) and that person could really make a difference. In my view becoming good at any of the three requires taking responsibility. I think the competencies that David mentions in post 1334 align well with these three types.

That being said, it also seems in today's information rich and connection abundant world, one needs to be proficient with tools and technologies to manage both. I thus see the technology perspective as being also quite important.

For those interested in looking at technology, one "KM" vendor, Entopia, has always promoted their approach as "bottom-up" Knowledge Management. It is interesting to note that they have just recently added a SNA tool to their product suite (Discloser: I have a consulting services partnership with them).

One of the posts reminded me of the theme contained in a couple of Tom Davenport's columns in CIO Magazine. In two different articles this past year he aptly captured one dilemma of a knowledge worker by saying, [companies are doing little to support the "knowledge worker" other than some unmeasured experiments](#), and "if businesses don't find a way to help the knowledge worker manage information technology, today's confusion will lead to tomorrow's insanity."

There were several posts directed toward the importance of "reflection." Whether it be individual or group reflection I think both are necessary to convert information and experiences into knowledge.

Unfortunately in today's task oriented, multi-tasking business climate there is little or no time to do either. So we see days full of back to back meetings where information is collected but there is no time to turn it into useful knowledge that can be acted upon. There are certainly a number of well documented business failures and tragedies where this certainly seemed to be at least part of the root cause. So as a finishing question, [how do we get the leaders of organizations or functional groups to see the importance of personal knowledge creation and sharing?](#)

John Barrett  
<http://www.iti-associates.com>

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Date: Sat Feb 21, 2004 6:21 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Catching Up As Fast As I Can! P.S. Another Sonnet!- Judith Meskill**

**From: Judith Meskill**

Subject: Catching Up As Fast As I Can! Judith Meskill

Dear David, et al,

Imagine my delight as I return from two weeks of 'right to left' coast travel in the USA - presenting at and attending three conferences - to find a ground swell of my favorite

thinkers [and many of the foundational members of my weblogging cohort & 'Orkut' rolodex] in a series of conversations regarding [what I perceive as] inter- personal knowledge 'mapping' augmented by social networking and collaboration [not a serious 'add' to the 'naming' endeavors David... (-:=)]

I just finished reading the posts for the first week of 'David Gurteen's Star Series Discussion' and I am still caught in the wash of the Tsunami of discourse. [BTW, David was my original inspiration to start blogging my [http://www.meskill.net/weblogs/ knowledge notes'...](http://www.meskill.net/weblogs/knowledge%20notes...)]

[I have had substantial, professional success with 'bottom-up' inter-personal knowledge mapping and collaboration systems. No punishment and no prizes.](#) We agree to be a team, we agree to share our expertise, opinions, insights, and 'knowledge' for the greater good of our products, our customers, and ourselves. [adoption and adaptation - our mantras]

My current focus is on creating viable 'knowledge worker infrastructures' - utilizing both knowledge sharing and social networking vehicles - Weblogs, Wikis, Instant Messaging, IRC channels, VoIP, photo sharing, 'search results' sharing, document sharing - in centralized and decentralized environments.

While my primary focus is on creating systems or technology to support knowledge worker activities - I am also keenly focused on all of the person-to-person, hands on, face-to-face, voice-to-voice interactions and communications necessary to build and support successful groups in the creation of sustainable knowledge work efforts.

Glad to be back in the AOK Star stream!

Best regards, Judith Meskill

PS: Could not resist the urge to 'Sonnetize' the Dialogue...

An Ode to David Gurteen's PKM Star Series [thus far...]

While Jerry Ash inspires me to 'play'  
With AOKers in these 'Star-filled schools'  
I find myself delighted day by day  
And mining 'gold' from 'social knowledge' rules

And now I find Dave Pollard speeding on  
While Jim McGee does caution us to mind  
The 'starting point' before we find we've gone  
Down paths that are 'coercive' as they wind

Now Lilia does model PKM -  
Intersecting in three circle spaces -

While Jack does woo us with a new found gem  
Sharpening our brains and not our faces

Then Bob, Denham, Andy, Kirby, and Paul  
Steve, Piers, Mark, David, John - Gosh what a haul!

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Date: Sun Feb 22, 2004 7:58 pm

Subject: **IPKM: Re. What would we do without our tools? - Bill Hall**

From: **Bill Hall, documentation systems analyst, Tenix Defence, Australia**

Subject: Tools have totally changed nature of human relationships.

Jerry,

The roles of personal vs organizational knowledge and the overlaps and interactions between them are of considerable theoretical interest to me - as well as my attempts to try to understand and "manage" various kinds and domains of knowledge in practice.

[Jerry's recent comments about the importance of infrastructure](#) (e.g., computers, phones, browsers and Google, etc.) [vs culture change in KM](#) raises the issue of just how rapidly the nature of humanity is changing as measured by the way we assemble, test, manage and disseminate knowledge. I argue that over the last 500 years (and most especially the last 50 years) these tools have totally changed our nature and relationships to the world in novel ways that we are still a long way from comprehending and managing effectively.

I look at these changes from my background in evolutionary biology and epistemology, and more recently as a content and knowledge management systems analyst; and I think it may be useful to share this perspective. Again, I have much less time than I would like to formulate my contribution, but I'll try. Hopefully, the present contribution may also help to clarify some of the outstanding questions from my contribution a couple of weeks ago that I haven't had time to answer.

Four technological revolutions extends our physical anatomy and physiology

- \* Metabolism and reach extended - cooking fire; sticks, stones as tools -- 2.5 M years
- \* Metabolism (animal) harnessed - ropes, hoes >10 K years for husbandry, farming
- \* Metabolism externalised (heat engines / use of abiotic energy sources -- 300 years for industrial revolution
- \* Cognition extended and externalised (50 yrs) for microelectronics

[Five cognitive revolutions extended human brains. The first two involved genetic changes via normal evolutionary processes. The second two involved multigenerational cultural changes. The last, based on the last technological revolution, is entirely within my own life-time of 60+ years.](#)

\* Memory and learning (200 M years) - During this era, our ancestors were one species of vertebrate animals amongst many others, and the main process for maintaining an adaptive edge over other competing species was standard evolutionary genetic change. Memory and learning primarily helped individuals cope with the variations and unique features in their own local environments.

\* Speech and the transfer of learning (1-2 M years). An increasing proportion of our adaptive responses depended on the cultural transmission of learning.

\* Counting, writing and reading (10,000 years). Learning became more precisely formulated and could be preserved and transmitted over generations and beyond the personal contact of individuals.

\* Books and printing presses - universal literacy and the development of science (550 years). Through wide dissemination it became easy to expose accumulated knowledge to critical review by peers (i.e., institution of cultural systems for implementing a correspondence theory of knowledge based on objective - "intersubjective" truth).

\* Automating cognition and the assembly of knowledge (50 years). Microelectronic tools have extended memory, routine processing, communication, indexing and retrieval, etc. vastly beyond the capabilities of the organic circuitry of single human brains.

Douglas Robertson (1998). *The New Renaissance: Computers and the Next Level of Civilization*. Barnes & Noble, 208 pp. expressed the magnitude of the cognitive changes in the number of data bits that could be managed and processed by a single individual organism (person). [I don't recommend buying the book. The review on the publisher's own site is much more accurate than Amazon's 5 star rating. You may need to cut and paste this long URL into your browser:

<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/bookSearch/isbnInquiry.asp?sourceid=&isbn=+0195121899+>.

The brief summary below distils most of its value]:

An individual with only learning and memory could perhaps encompass  $10^7$  (10 to the 7th power) bits.

The development of language syntax and semantics might have increased comprehension by at least two orders of magnitude to  $10^9$  bits.

Writing (prior to the development of printing presses) added another two orders of magnitude to  $10^{11}$  bits.

As printing became increasingly industrialized, the relative cost of books continued to decline until the mid-20th Century when the mass production process was fully industrialized, and literacy became almost a universal human birth right. Robertson

(1998) calculates that with humans able to access libraries of recorded information that the information accessible to a single human brain increased by more than 6 orders of magnitude (or to  $10^{17}$  bits) compared to the pre-printing era of writing.

Printing provided the means to replicate, store and distribute practical knowledge at a relatively low cost. Computerized word processing, networks and the Internet are enabled by the microelectronic revolution, and represent vastly important tools for capturing, replicating and distributing ever larger volumes of knowledge extraordinarily faster. Here, Robertson (1998) estimates that "computers" now allow individual humans to create and control  $10^{25}$  bits of information - or 8 orders of magnitude more information than even cheap printing gave people access to (and this is still growing exponentially).

The increased information available for processing into knowledge through extended cognition of course enhances the effectiveness of OODA processes (the Boyd loop as Denham recently referenced in his blog on knowledge augmentation:

[http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/knowledge\\_augme.html](http://denham.typepad.com/km/2004/01/knowledge_augme.html)).

Because this technology to extend and even automate cognition has changed so radically within single individuals' lifetimes, many people find it difficult to come to terms with the shift in this last revolution from tangible paper to the intangible aspects of electronic information storage, management, display and distribution. The exponentially growing rapidity of change seems revolutionary to many.

Many of us are aware that the new technologies are extending our cognition - but I think we are all a long way from fully comprehending how these new extensions to our cognition are changing our nature as individuals within the world we interact with.

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A second issue in the framework of (organizational) knowledge management is the relationship between personal knowledge management and organizational knowledge management.

I have argued previously that organizations are third order autopoietic entities (see Hall, W.P. Organisational Autopoiesis and Knowledge Management. submitted to ISD '03 Twelfth International Conference on Information Systems Development - Methods & Tools, Theory & Practice, Melbourne, Australia, 25 - 27 August, 2003 [eprint available on request]; and Hall, W.P. Working Towards Biologically Based Theories of Organization and Knowledge to Understand How Organizations Work Best. Joint Lunchtime Seminar, 08/09/03, Rutherford House, Wellington. New Zealand Knowledge Management Network and Government Information Systems Forum. [Presentation - [http://www.nzkm.net/assets/NZKMNetGovis\(1\).pdf](http://www.nzkm.net/assets/NZKMNetGovis(1).pdf)]; also see Randall Whitaker's pages for a comprehensive and comprehensible discussion of autopoiesis: Self-Organization, Autopoiesis, and Enterprises. - <http://www.acm.org/sigois/auto/Main.html>. The Observer Web: Autopoiesis and Enaction. - <http://www.enolagaia.com/AT.html>. Encyclopaedia

Autopoietica: An Annotated Lexical Compendium on Autopoiesis and Enaction - <http://www.enolagaia.com/AT.html#EncAuto>).

Linguistic expressions and revolutionary cognitive technologies (as discussed above) enable organizations to exist as entities that are much more than just the collective properties of the individuals. Electronically assembled messages, documents, procedures, manuals, electronically enacted processes, etc. represent recorded and distilled information and knowledge objects that are automated to varying degrees and are available to help regulate and inform individual actions for the strategic purposes of the organizations. It is knowledge in its objective forms (see Karl Popper's Objective Knowledge for the underlying epistemology) that provides the substance of the cybernetic regulation that maintains the organization's integrity against the tendency for dis-integration. James Martin's 1996 book, Cybercorp - <http://www.meansbusiness.com/Digital-Enterprise-Books/Cybercorp.htm> (worth buying if you don't own it) still does a better job than most at illustrating the biological nature of organizations - although I think he somewhat lost the plot by not fully comprehending biological the substance of what he was using primarily as metaphor.

[As organizational knowledge managers we need to fully comprehend the interactions between managing our extended cognitive environment for purely personal purposes and the various organizations we may be part of](#) (nothing in the theory precludes an individual from belonging to and participating in more than one autopoietic organization at once - as long as each organization is able to regulate the individuals' contributions for the purpose of that organization).

[I think one of the biggest roadblocks to achieving this comprehension is neglecting the role\(s\) of technology in extending both personal and organizational cognition.](#) We need to untangle the issues relating to the person as an individual versus the person as a component in the transcendent organization of persons. Effective KM in this environment also requires effective understanding of the importance and interactions of three components: people, process and infrastructure/technology at the personal and transcendent organizational level. At any one point we may focus on personal issues and practices, technologies, process improvement, etc. but this should always be done with a deep awareness that each issue needs to be considered in relationship to all three dimensions across the personal and organizational levels of complexity in order to have a full understanding of the issues likely to give practical results when applied.

Bill Hall

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 8:07 am

**Subject:** IPKM: I'm Your Substitute Moderator in David's Absence - Jerry Ash

**From:** Jerry Ash

Subject: David's out of the loop for a few days.

Hi All.

Long after David Gurteen and I scheduled his turn in the STAR seat for February, he became engaged in some business in London that would take him out of the loop for a few days.

I decided, rather than to reschedule, to plan on serving as his substitute moderator until his return, which may not be until Thursday. He is going to try to get to an Internet Cafe on Tuesday and so we may hear from him then (for those of us online) -- Wednesday in the Digest.

David has ignited such a vibrant discussion, however, that I doubt if his absence will slow the Dialogue. Please help me keep this discussion on personal knowledge management going. It is critical to the goals of AOK which has always been to keep a major part of our focus on knowledge \*work\*.

Thanks.  
Jerry

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Date: Sat Feb 21, 2004 7:04 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Knowledge is Truth (I Know Some Will Disagree) - Mark McElroy**

**From: Mark W. McElroy**

Subject: Knowledge is Truth (I Know Some Will Disagree)

David:

You said:

>>Too often in discussions I see people argue about some aspect of  
>>knowledge management where to me the root of the argument is in their  
>>different views of what constitutes knowledge - there is no real  
>>difference of opinion. At times like this I feel there is a very real  
>>need to agree on a definition. But in any discussion that I have been  
>>involved in where people have tried - it seems to me that agreement  
>>is impossible.

[My reply:]

I believe the mistake we make in debating definitions is that such debates are largely political and ad hoc. In the case of 'knowledge,' I find it more useful to ask a different question, which is 'Can there be such a thing as correspondence between statements and the facts to which they refer?' This is a better question to ask than 'What is knowledge,' because it deals more directly with the key issues underlying knowledge (i.e., that there are things in the world and whether or not we can perceive and understand them correctly).

In other words, knowledge is truth. What we can debate, then, is what the alternative, competing views of truth are, and similarly, what the alternative, competing views of how to establish it are. Unless we tackle the issue at that level of analysis, simply quoting competing definitions of truth does nothing but beg the question (not that anyone was doing that here).

Incidentally, I fully expect that I will be roundly criticized for once again making the outlandish claim that [knowledge has something to do with truth, and that we in KM ought to think about it in those terms. My own view is that discussions of this kind that omit consideration of this all-important link are doomed from the start](#), because they never make the connection between the concept of knowledge and our continuing attempts in life (and business) to form beliefs and make statements about the world that we think are true. If true beliefs or true statements are not knowledge (and vice versa), then I think we need a new word for what they are. But of course I think they are knowledge.

You next said:

>>So Denham's words stuck a chord. Understanding knowledge is about  
>>wrestling with it over a long period of time and maybe you will never  
>>get to totally understand it but you should get a better feel for  
>>it :=)

[My reply:]

I guess I think this also evades the issue by failing to (a) express a theory of truth, and (b) failing to express a theory of evaluation for what should pass as truth. In other words, what is it about the passing of time that gets us closer to the truth? What is it, in fact, that we are doing during that time, and how does our doing it bring us closer to the truth?

We can all be more rigorous about this sort of thing. In 'The New KM' school of practice, for example, we hold to the correspondence theory of truth (i.e., our answer to the question I posed above is 'yes'), and we also hold to a theory of evaluation (of competing beliefs or statements about truth) that we call 'fair comparison.' I won't go into all that here, but it does serve to say that [discussions about what 'knowledge means' need not be confined to the level of definitions, or reliant upon vague ideas about what happens over time.](#)

Does this make sense to you?

Regards,

Mark

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Date: Sun Feb 22, 2004 5:24 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Reaction to "Knowledge = Truth" BS - Steve Else [+Jerry Ash]**  
**From: Steve Else, executive director, Center for Public-Private Enterprise, U.S.**  
Subject: Reaction to "Knowledge = Truth" BS - Steve Else  
Subject: Knowledge is too complex to be trusted as "truth." - Jerry Ash

Just because someone holds the conviction that "Knowledge = Truth," that does not make it so. No dictionary I am aware of makes this claim about either knowledge or truth. Even if "theorists" of this "Knowledge = Truth" school have built models, published books and gained a lot of attention for shining light on the -- until then -- in their view -- black hole of KM, that does not make their formula a universally valid one; therefore, it is not really an acceptable formula at all. In other words, their knowledge about knowledge is untrue, except in their own minds. That being said, I grant them that what they believe to be knowledge is still knowledge as they perceive it.

Steve

[**Jerry Ash** - I wrote a bit on your side of the subject last night when I edited Mark's post but thought better of it and deleted it before I hit the send button.

But the passion of your statement brings me back to the forum.

I too reacted negatively about knowledge as truth. First of all, the dictionary equates truth with "honesty", then the "real state of things", then "fact," then an "accepted statement," and lastly "correctness based on veracity (verifiability)." Quite a range of definitions!

As a former journalism professor and practitioner, I have given a great deal of thought to "truth." Back in the old days (I don't see much evidence of this now), I used to lecture my students about the need for reporters to write the unbiased truth. Then I told them being unbiased would be impossible unless they were brain dead. Unbiased reporting was an ideal to strive for, but the more we knew (knowledge) about a subject, the more we became impassioned and the more difficult it was to walk neutral ground. I believe there is "truth," but I have little faith (particularly in this age of screaming journalism) in the ability of a human being to perceive truth as pure "fact" or "correctness." I can buy into truth as "honesty," because one can honestly be wrong but claim he told the truth.

I know I risk igniting a political argument (please don't), but the best modern example is President Bush's defense that he "told the truth" about the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which turned out to be false. But the President didn't lie, right? So his "truth" was only "knowledge" as he knew it, no matter how faulty.

Without getting into a philosophical debate that would surely send most of us practical types looking for the scroll button, I only want to say that the very idea that "truth" is "knowledge" -- or not -- is one more reason why individual-personal KM matters. "Knowledge," in my opinion, is not a verifiable fact as much as it is the sum total of creative thought (one's own and that of others) built on presumed facts (truths). The result may or may not be true. And so, there is "good" knowledge and "bad" knowledge

depending on the facts (true or not) and how those facts are processed and acted upon. The quality of one's personal knowledge, its dependability and its successful use determines an individual's value.

With all due respect to Mark McElroy, whom I respect and admire, knowledge is too complicated and too human to be taken for granted as indisputable truth (fact -- artifact -- datapoint)! Don't you think?

Jerry]

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 7:59 am

**Subject: IPKM: IPKM: Re. Reaction to "Knowledge = Truth" - Valdis Krebs**

**From: Valdis Krebs, founder/owner, orgnet.com, U.S.**

Subject: Can we please get back to \*practical\* KM?

Knowledge like Truth is socially constructed by each individual and those around him/her. There is no one/ultimate truth nor one/ultimate knowledge except in the eyes of dictators and other despots who wish to rule by claiming to have such an artifact [I am including political, religious, business, neighborhood and family despots]. If X gets more people to agree with his/her 'truth' than Y, then X wins the despot derby [and many will view X as having the ultimate/greater truth]... for a while... but things always change.

Anyway, that is how I see things from my location in the human network...

Can we please get back to \*practical\* KM?

Valdis

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 3:30 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Re. Knowledge and Truth - Mark McElroy**

**From: Mark W. McElroy**

Subject: It's all about truth and the search for it.

Dear Steve and Jerry:

Nothing like using the "T" word on a KM list to get the juices flowing, I guess. I must first confess to having made a deliberately provocative statement (sorry about that), which I'd now like to refine (but probably not to your satisfaction).

Knowledge consists of beliefs or claims that we think or say are true, recognizing, however, that not everyone regards their beliefs or claims as necessarily true (i.e., with certainty).

In other words, knowledge is what we either believe or say is true, although for some, such truths are viewed as possibly mistaken. This latter group consists of the fallibilists, as compared to justificationists (e.g., of the "justified true belief" [JTB] school of knowledge), who view knowledge as true with certainty. By the way, that school itself (JTB), which goes back to at least Plato, offers vivid testimony to my claim that knowledge entails beliefs or claims about truth. (I'm not making this up).

Also, for what it's worth, my Webster's offers one definition of knowledge which reads, "the fact or condition of apprehending truth or fact."

Please understand that I am trying to characterize the predominant and competing schools of thought (collectively) on what knowledge is from an impartial perspective and in a most general way. I'm not making any normative or prescriptive declarations here. I'm just saying, 'hey, all of the epistemological traditions out there are about reaching the truth, and the beliefs and claims their adherents produce along the way is what they all call knowledge.' I'm not making any judgments here. Just describing the competing schools of thought on knowledge and what they all purport to be doing.

The main schools I refer to are the two earlier mentioned (justificationists and fallibilists). For both, knowledge is all about truth and our attempts to reach it. They mainly differ from one another with regard to certainty, as I explained above.

The justificationists and the fallibilists further break down into their corresponding schools of thought about what truth is. For some, it is correspondence with the facts (realists); for others it is coherence with prior knowledge (coherentists); for others, it is local and personal (relativists); and yet for others, it is what works (pragmatists).

All of these epistemologies are about truth-making. For all of them, knowledge is truth, and it was in that sense that I made my original statement. They just differ on the details about (a) how to define truth, (b) how to test beliefs and claims in order to reach truth, and (c) whether or not their conclusions about truth can be certain. What they all agree on, however, is that their respective types of knowledge comprise truth (for each of them, according to their respective schools).

End of impartial tutorial. For the record, I, and Joe Firestone, and all that our conception of 'The New KM' entails at KMCI, are decidedly fallibilist and realist. [For us, truth consists of beliefs or claims that we either think or say are true \(because they seem to correspond with the facts\), but which we always regard as possibly false \(because we know we are fallible\).](#)

[So I think, in the end, that the business of epistemology, and learning, and innovation, and problem solving, and knowledge processing is utterly and inescapably about truth and the search for it.](#) And it continues to amaze me that there are so many in KM who would dispute this. KM is all the poorer for it, I think.

Regards,

Mark

PS - Here's a link to a summary of competing epistemologies and their relationships to business and KM:

[http://www.macroinnovation.com/images/corporate\\_epistemolo.pdf](http://www.macroinnovation.com/images/corporate_epistemolo.pdf)

Mark W. McElroy

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 3:23 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Reaction to "Knowledge = Truth - Bill Hall

**From:** Bill Hall

Subject: Personal and organizational benefit of testing knowledge as "truth."

I think Mark will also most likely reply to this one, but because I work from similar epistemological sources for what Mark is trying to explain, I will add my two cents.

I would certainly never claim that knowledge directly equates to truth, nor do I think Mark is making this claim. [The concept is that the truth of reality is a fiduciary principle against which our claims to know should be tested.](#) The more vigorously the claims are tested the closer we are likely to be to true knowledge. What follows is derived from my readings of Karl Popper's later works on objective knowledge and the evolutionary theory of knowledge.

The most my epistemology would claim is:

1. Truth exists.
2. It is possible that what we claim to know may actually be true.
3. It is impossible to ever prove deductively (i.e., absolutely) that any claim to know about the real world is true (or that it is false - unless we are dealing with issues of pure logic).
4. (The most difficult point to genuinely understand:)

Nevertheless, true reality (i.e., existence) remains as a fiduciary principle against which we can test our claims to know. By continually testing (criticising) our claims to know by making predictions based on the claimed knowledge against prior and current experience with reality we can selectively eliminate the less realistic of our claims. Those claims that have been criticised and not found wanting are demonstrably more useful than the claims we have eliminated because their predictions have been falsified. Claims that have survived iterated tests without being falsified are likely to be closer to the genuine truth

than claims that have not been tested at all (which is not to say that any one tested claim is actually true or that any one untested claim is necessarily false).

5. In a business sense, knowledge based on multiple connections and tests against external reality is likely to be closer to the truth and thus make accurate predictions about the consequences of actions than untested claims.

There are both personal and organizational benefits to be gained by ensuring that what we believe (i.e., claim to know) to be true is continually tested and criticised in terms of its ability to usefully forecast the world. Knowledge-based systems that do not include this fiduciary feedback are likely to retain bad knowledge and lead to wrong decisions than are those which formally and continually incorporate experience based feedback.

Bill

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 9:11 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Practical Value of Theoretical Underpinnings - Mark McElroy

**From:** Mark W. McElroy

Subject: KM strategy not firmly rooted in epistemology is anything \*but\* "practical."

All:

First, thank you Bill Hall for that posting. It offers a very succinct summary of Popper's Critical Rationalist epistemology, which as you know is the basis of the KMCI view. And your characterization of my meaning and intent was dead on.

Now to Valdis. OK let's get "practical." If you hold to the geocentric view of the universe and you want to get to Mars, will you ever get there? Seems like a little theory might be well advised in such cases, or in any other case where we want to focus on practice with direction and reliability and where much is at stake. KM is no exception.

For example, in this case Valdis, you said: "Knowledge like Truth is socially constructed by each individual and those around him/her." Good. I agree. But according to what theory of knowledge and evaluation do they do so? More importantly, how OUGHT they do so? Why worry about this, you ask?

Well, if it is the purpose of KM to create and maintain the kinds of social systems you point to (i.e., ones that make it possible for us to 'socially construct' our knowledge), then we might want to take a moment and decide how we want that system to work. Or should we just let nature take its course? I don't think so.

You also said, "There is no one/ultimate truth nor one/ultimate knowledge..." Now this begins to tend towards relativism, according to which there is no truth and so we should all abandon our attempts to reach it and settle, instead, for truths that we create (socially)

without regard for the way the world really is -- i.e., if a claim passes community muster, it's truth.

Now can you not see, Valdis, that the type of system a KM strategy based on that view would attempt to build and maintain would be wildly different from one based on an opposite or a competing point of view? So why should we all agree to simply dismiss the theoretical underpinnings of KM when such underpinnings can make all the difference from a "practical" point of view? Are you asking us to get "practical" about building relativist knowledge processing systems in our organizations, as if we have already agreed to do so and relativism is the one best way?

Thanks, but if that's "practical," count me out, because relativism is arguably false, and any KM strategy based upon it will most likely fail. What we need is socially constructed knowledge that will help us to take effective action in life, and the relativist formula just doesn't cut it.

You see when you set out to launch KM initiatives with the intent of enhancing an organization's capacity to produce knowledge, you need to specify the logic of how the system you're trying to build will operate. How and at what point will it have produced knowledge, and according to what criteria? Unless you resolve questions like these before leaping into practice, practice becomes reckless and irresponsible. A KM strategy that is not firmly rooted in a clearly defined epistemology is anything but "practical."

Regards,

Mark

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 10:00 am

**Subject:** IPKM: re. Mark McElroy's 'Extrapolation' - Valdis Krebs

**From:** Valdis Krebs

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 327

Wow, Mark that is some extrapolation of what I said! Remember YOU are asking [and answering] all those questions below, not me, nor anyone else.

I choose not to respond any further.

Valdis

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 5:28 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Knowledge Once Again - Joe Firestone

**From:** Joe Firestone, CKO, Executive information Systems, Inc., U.S.

Subject: Knowledge and Truth - Mark McElroy

Dear Steve, Jerry, Valdis, Mark, and Bill

I agree with everyone that knowledge is not truth. In fact this view is in contradiction with TNKM's (The New Knowledge Management's) view of "knowledge". In our workshops on Knowledge Management and in our joint work published by KMCI Press/Butterworth-Heinemann called *Key Issues in The New Knowledge Management*, as well as in my book from the same publisher entitled *Enterprise Information Portals and Knowledge Management*, Mark and I have offered the following theory:

"Knowledge is an encoded, tested, evaluated, and surviving structure of information (e.g., DNA instructions, beliefs, or claims) that helps the system that developed it to adapt"

And we've further said that there are three types of knowledge:

-- Encoded structures in physical systems allowing those objects to adapt to their environment (genetic and neural knowledge);  
-- Tested, evaluated, and surviving beliefs (in minds) about the world (mental knowledge);  
-- Tested, evaluated, and surviving, sharable (objective), linguistic formulations about the world (artifact-based or cultural knowledge)."

Nowhere in this account is there an assumption or implication that "Knowledge is truth". That simple equation says nothing about beliefs (in minds) or claims (in cultural artifacts) that are tested, evaluated, and still surviving. It allows someone to say that because they "know" that something is true it must be so, because "knowledge is truth". Dangerous reasoning, as I'm sure we all recognize.

The TNKM definition, instead of emphasizing certainty, emphasizes the critical approach, as embodied in the idea of all forms of knowledge being subject to testing and evaluation. It also emphasizes the idea of adaptation to the environment and is part of the larger context of TNKM's evolutionary epistemology. In general, Bill Hall's views and ours are very close. And I was happy to see his very clear statement on both truth and knowledge.

I would like to offer a comment on one passage in Mark's latest post, since he indicated that I agreed with the passage.

"For the record, I, and Joe Firestone, and all that our conception of 'The New KM' entails at KMCI, are decidedly fallibilist and realist. For us, truth consists of beliefs or claims that we either think or say are true (because they seem to correspond with the facts), but which we always regard as possibly false (because we know we are fallible)."

My view is close to this, in that it is certainly both fallibilist and realist. But note that to be a realist requires one to accept the idea that true knowledge claims correspond to the facts (i.e. reality) in some sense of the term "correspond". According to realism then,

*\*truth is a relation between what we say and the way the world is\*, and it consists of statements or beliefs of ours that correspond to reality regardless of whether we either think or say that these beliefs are true. That is:*

-- We can think or say that something is true and we may be correct

-- We can think or say that something is false and it may be true

-- We can think or say that we are undecided about the truth or falsity of one of our beliefs or statements and these beliefs or statements of ours may be either true or false regardless of what we think or say about them.

Truth, then, has nothing to do with what we think or say (our meta-claims) about our beliefs or statements that assert something about the world, but only with the correspondence of these beliefs or statements with facts.

Mark may have intended to say that in TNKM we may call a statement or belief "true" when in view of previous testing and criticism of it, the belief or statement is unrefuted and appears to have performed better than its competitors, and that while using the term "true" it's always the case that we use it with the qualification that we may be in error and that what we thought was "true" may turn out to be false. If this is what you meant Mark, I agree that this view is consistent with mine and with what we have previously written in connection with TNKM.

I agreed with what Steve said about Mark's equation: "knowledge is truth", but as I've stated above, neither Mark nor I are members of the "knowledge = truth" school.

Valdis said:

"Knowledge like Truth is socially constructed by each individual and those around him/her. There is no one/ultimate truth nor one/ultimate knowledge . . ."

I agree with both of these statements. That is, I think people and groups always create knowledge in a social or cultural context, and that knowledge is socially constructed. But I don't see how that comments relates to what we have been discussing and to the use of truth as a regulative ideal in knowledge creation.

I also believe there is no one ultimate truth or ultimate knowledge. But then, again, I don't think Mark or Bill or I have ever claimed any such thing. Only that statements may be true, that we believe that there are some true statements that have been formulated by intelligent beings, and also that the idea of truth that we adhere to, namely that truth is correspondence to the facts, (a) may itself be true and (b) exists.

Finally, Jerry, on the subject of "practicality". Mark did not originally bring up the issue of "knowledge". As I recall, it was David who introduced it because he thought it important from a practical point of view. I have always thought that the issue of

"knowledge" was very important since it is closely related to the question of the distinction between knowledge and information. [Without a clear theory of knowledge how can we tell when we've created knowledge or when we've shared it? How can we tell when we've increased its quality?](#) How can we tell when we have a knowledge base or just a database? How can we tell when we have a best practices system or just a practices system? How can we tell whether we have an information portal or a knowledge portal? And finally, how can we tell whether we are information managers or knowledge managers, and therefore whether we have a distinct field of practice or not?

It seems to me that all of these are very practical questions, especially for those who purport to practice KM, and who ask clients, students, and colleagues to believe that they are practitioners in a distinct field of practice.

Joe

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 10:06 am

**Subject:** [IPKM: re. Knowledge Once Again - Mark McElroy](#)

**From:** Mark W. McElroy

Subject: Explaining Seemingly Contrary Views

Joe:

I certainly agree with the summary you gave of our definition of knowledge (obviously). But please understand, in making my claim that 'knowledge is truth,' I was trying to take an impartial stand, not a partisan one. My point was to say that what knowledge is depends on your epistemology. And putting my own (or our own) feelings about the subject aside for a moment, we can say that all of the competing epistemologies are arguably about truth-making. For each of them, knowledge is truth, recognizing, however, that (a) their criteria for what should pass as truth differ, (b) their separate criteria for evaluating competing beliefs or claims within their criteria for truth differ, and (c) the degree of certainty they attach to the truths they produce according to 'a' and 'b' also differ.

If I were trying to teach someone about epistemology and knowledge in general, that is the way I would do it. I find it useful and instructive to handle it in that fashion because it presents the subject in a way that calls attention to what unites the competing epistemologies, while acknowledging their differences. But if I were trying to advocate for "our own" epistemology -- the one we teach in TNKM, Popper's Critical Rationalism, etc. -- I would approach the subject a bit less generally. But that was not my intent, and so I did not.

So, subject to the qualifications cited above, and recognizing my intent to present an impartial view of knowledge in a way that generally characterizes the competing and predominant epistemologies, [I stand by my remark that \(for all of the competing](#)

epistemologies), knowledge is truth. They just differ on the details. This is not what I am saying knowledge is; rather, it is what they are saying it is.

Regards,

Mark

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 4:41 pm

Subject: **IPKM: re. Knowledge is Truth and Other Philosophies - Joe Firestone**

**From: Joe Firestone**

Subject: "Knowledge is truth" and other theories.

Mark,

You said:

"But please understand, in making my claim that 'knowledge is truth,' I was trying to take an impartial stand, not a partisan one."

But 'knowledge is truth' is *\*not impartial\**. It is a theory about what knowledge is. Furthermore, this theory is most compatible with those epistemologies that assert that "knowledge is justified true belief." Fallibilist epistemologies assert that knowledge may be, but is not necessarily, true because today's knowledge may be proven false tomorrow.

You also said:

"My point was to say that what knowledge is depends on your epistemology. And putting my own (or our own) feelings about the subject aside for a moment, we can say that all of the competing epistemologies are arguably about truth-making."

First what knowledge is doesn't, from a realist point of view, depend wholly on one's epistemology. Knowledge, as the saying goes, 'is what it is'. What depends on one's epistemology is one's ideas or theories or beliefs about knowledge and its character. As you know, epistemologies, like other knowledge claims are open to criticism and since they are real world theories (cultural knowledge about the nature of knowledge) they may be viewed as either true or false.

Do encoded, tested, evaluated, and surviving structures of information that help the systems that developed them to adapt, exist? We believe they do and that this is a true knowledge claim about the character of knowledge.

Do justified true beliefs exist? We believe that they don't because justification is impossible, and since knowledge manifestly \*is\*, that JTB is a false theory of knowledge.

Is knowledge simply a belief or a knowledge claim we think is true? No, because we may believe something is true without having tested and evaluated it, our belief may be based on faith, or it may simply be based on intuition, but at least for some of us, we would not be willing to use the term "knowledge" without exposing a belief to experience and evaluation against its competitors. There is a difference between saying "I believe 'x' is true" and saying "I know 'x' is true."

Second, instrumentalism is about making knowledge claims that are tools for producing accurate predictions, not about making truth. In addition, skepticism or epistemological anarchism, represented by philosophers such as Paul Feyerabend, deny the possibility of truth-making altogether. While we may be able to neglect the skeptics because of their small numbers, there are many more instrumentalists around who view knowledge production as good tool-making.

I agree with your statement that epistemologies differ on how they view truth, evaluate competing beliefs or claims, and on the degree of certainty they attach to knowledge; and to your general teaching strategy in the area of corporate epistemology. The way I would put things, however, is that [competing epistemologies differ on how they view truth. Most seek it, but define it differently, and have different ways of evaluating it. Some epistemologies however, do not even seek truth, but seek tools, or seek art, and these epistemologies also differ on their evaluation perspectives or criteria.](#)

Best,

Joe

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:24 am

**Subject:** IPKM: 'No Rhetorical Statements' - Mark McElroy

**From:** Mark W. McElroy

**Subject:** RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 328

Joe (Firestone):

Boy, whereas some people just can't take a joke, you can't take a rhetorical statement. You know, Joe, rhetoric can sometimes play a very useful role in discussion, but if you refuse to go along with the spirit of it, it crashes. We'll have to get Jerry to post a warning on the AOK site that reads: "No Rhetorical Statements."

So just for you, Joe, [I will amend my \(rhetorical\) claim that knowledge is truth. For you, I will say that 'knowledge is about truth.'](#) It is about truth for all the justificationist

traditions; it is about truth for the fallibilists; and it is even about truth for the instrumentalists, who as you explained in your message do not believe in truth, but who no less start with the idea of truth (by denying it) as their jumping off point. The same goes for skepticism or epistemological anarchism.

Next, your latest remarks were laced, once again, with pronouncements made from a critical rationalist point of view. I agree with them. But as I have said, that was never the point. Instead, I was trying (and still am) to take an impartial view for purposes of discussion. You keep pulling us back to the views WE have. I, on the other hand, was trying to get us to consider how we humans, in general, approach the subject of knowledge, and so my newly-tailored answer for you (and others who may prefer it) is to say that 'knowledge is about truth.'

Last, if we want people to appreciate the good of critical rationalism, I think it's helpful to first get them accustomed to what the issues are, and the problems that critical rationalism arguably solves. Or you can just dive in at the start by making declarations about knowledge and the world from a critical rationalist point of view, without first establishing that kind of context. I chose the former approach. I think it's pedagogically more effective. And I used rhetoric to help get things going. And go they did.

Regards,

Mark

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:53 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. 'No Rhetorical Statements' - Joe Firestone

**From:** Joe Firestone

Subject: Knowledge is about Truth

Mark,

Thanks for your response.

I'm satisfied that our exchange has clarified the difficulties involved in the theory "Knowledge is Truth" and I thank you for the opportunity your rhetorical device gave me to bring these front-and-center. I will leave the discussion here since the overwhelming sentiment seems to be in favor of getting back to the PKM/IPKM conversation.

Best,

Joe

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 12:44 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Re. Back to Practical KM - Jerry Ash**

**From: Jerry Ash**

Subject:

Thank you, Valdis, for your plea to return to "practical KM." The theoretical and philosophical components of the knowledge factor are certainly important, but David's IPKM Dialogue has finally pointed us to the delivery end of knowledge work and I'd like to keep us on that track.

Some of you may recall that I tried last year to launch the collaborative writing of a book on PKM which we gave the working title of "Personal Knowledge Management: How to Leverage What You Know." Some 40 of us signed onto the PKM BookTeam with high energy, but in just a few months the passion waned. I take full discredit for that, but I have not abandoned the idea of generating the first KM book to actually target those who hold and control the raw material of the Knowledge Age -- personal knowledge. We can talk among ourselves about Knowledge Management until we are blue in the face, but until the message inspires the front line worker, we are getting nowhere.

The discomfort with yet another KM term (PKM or even IPKM) was obvious the minute we began labeling the "thing" or the book. Because of my journalist/PR/marketing background, packaging the idea matters to me. So, [I've been searching for a way to present the meaning and value of knowledge work to knowledge workers](#). Prior to the beginning of the Gurteen Dialogue, I had been toying with "Self Control" as a catchy book title. Not only does it avoid the dreaded "KM," it is the antithesis of Knowledge Management. I know, I know -- it doesn't seem to embrace the one thing we all do seem to agree on -- collaboration. Of course, the book (the message) has to reach beyond self, but collaboration can't occur until individuals begin to have faith in their own knowledge. For starters, then, it seemed to me "Self Control" might be the right hook to get the knowledge worker's attention.

Then I remembered a play I once sponsored for a political candidate for governor based on the life of Ralph Waldo Emerson and his lessons on self-reliance. In it, there was a line that has resonated with me for 20 years! Emerson had landed in jail for some act of civil disobedience and his friend Henry David Thoreau -- a fellow member of a controversial group of romantic writers in New England, the American Transcendentalists -- came to visit him. Here's the quote that means so much to me:

Thoreau: "What are you doing in there?" Emerson: "What are you doing out there?"

During the birth of the Industrial Age, the Transcendentalists believed in the independent individual whose intuition was the surest route to truth. Emerson's essay "[Self Reliance](#)" is one of his most memorable works. His belief in individualism, however, was not simply a matter of self-centered assertion or immature narcissism. He did, however, emphasize the importance of non-conformity and independent belief. Contrast that with the ensuing Industrial Age, the culture it created and the problem we have today promoting the idea of personal knowledge management.

Here is a few tastes of "Self Reliance:"

"There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried."

And:

"We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope."

And finally:

"The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs."

I've said it before; I say it again: Our problem is not in assessing workers' self value, but in convincing them to use it and helping them do so with responsibility.

Jerry

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 8:57 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Santa Clara Approach - Bob Parden

**From:** Bob Parden, professor, School of Engineering, Santa Clara University, U.S.

**Subject:** Suggested book title -- Collaborative Action Leadership.

Jerry, let me try to present our approach:

1. We all perceive the world through slightly different lenses because of our personal, accumulated knowledge and experience.
2. Our personal knowledge is but one small slice of what is out there.
3. Increasingly the game is working with others, sharing and learning, and expanding everyone's knowledge.
4. It takes a coalition attitude, a willingness to work for the common good, to share in a most collaborative manner.

5. The sticky wicket is to achieve synergy in solving the problem of the day. This is where the dialog is essential.
6. We develop facilitator skills to conduct the dialog in 7 to 9 member groups--these are courses in an Engineering Management degree program.
7. Collaboration is the key -- willingness to fully participate, willingness to devote the time to persist in a difficult problem solution.
8. We feel that breaking this impasse requires new kinds of leadership: self, group, and organizational networks -- where the dialog may be global.
9. For example, our current problem is the outsourcing of the work of technical professionals, Drucker's knowledge workers, to global competitors.

How should a Silicon Valley university respond? This requires technical, social, political, and economic inputs to describe the future of participants in value-added chains.

We believe that universities have been concerned with knowledge management for some time, and continue to face the question of how to best share knowledge.

My title for the eternal book is "Collaborative Action Leadership."

Bob

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:18 am

Subject: **IPKM: The Santa Clara View - David Gurteen**

From: **David Gurteen**

Subject: reply to Bob Pardon

Hi Bob,

I like your approach and the points you make in your enumerated list.

Your items reinforce for me the fact that the heart of IPKM is not about new tools -- be they personal ones or technological ones -- its about seeing the world in a new way and adopting new attitudes to how we go about our work.

Anthony de Mello says "The only way to change is by changing your understanding." Its this change in our understanding of the world that is needed."

In this context I love the words of John Holt: "Children do not need to be made to learn to be better, told what to do or shown how. If they are given access to enough of the world, they will see clearly enough what things are truly important to themselves and to others, and they will make for themselves a better path into that world than anyone else could make for them"

We are all children :-)

David.

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 3:37 pm

**Subject: IPKM: re. Knowledge and Truth - Verna Allee**

**From: Verna Allee, president, Verna Allee Associates and previous STAR**

Series moderator <<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/allee.html>>

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 325

Hello Jerry,

I very much liked Steve Else's and Jerry's response to the statement that knowledge=truth. Both views sum up the gist of my own thinking on this topic.

While I only sporadically have been attending to this discussion group I just want to say again how much I appreciate Jerry's good work in keeping the tone and quality high. Aside from an occasional lapse into snippiness and sarcasm I usually find the discussions thoughtful, respectful and interesting.

Time has not allowed me to respond to Bill Hall's copious contributions to this space, which I do regret. Those of you who are familiar with my work know that [my first book was devoted to the continuum of knowledge complexity and my most recent book, The Future of Knowledge , demonstrates the practicality of the organic view and autopoiesis through my value network analysis methodology.](#)

Obviously I have much to say on both of those topics and did not feel I could dive into the discussion lightly. There are, however, condensed versions of themes from both of these books in the library on my website at:

<http://www.vernaallee.com>.

Specific items relevant to recent discussions would be the white paper "A Value Network Approach" and the Knowledge Complexity diagram and Easy Reference Chart. Also, I have a series of workshops and appearances coming up in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore in March and early April. You can find the links to those events in the calendar on my website.

Verna Allee

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 3:16 pm

**Subject: IPKM: Some practical-ish questions - Piers Young**

**From: Piers Young**

Subject: Any ideas on metadata frameworks; or should we leave it alone?

Valdis is right, I think. Interesting as epistemology is, it doesn't have a great track record as a provider of useful tools.

As I mentioned before, intuitively Dave Pollard's 3-tier model hits the right buttons but I think the metadata tier needs some scrutiny. The problem's similar to one of the issues raised in a recent Stephen Downes essay: "the blogging network and RSS link content, but not identities, while the social software network links identities, but not content".

The semantic metadata route, peer-to-peer ontologies et al have a huge amount of potential, but only really for giving all that powerful software some more "intelligence".

Perhaps there's another route, though: giving the intelligence (us) more power. For PKM/PCM/P-anything-the-personal-side-of-the-network, perhaps another metadata layer could help us e.g. skim blogs for relevant content more easily?

One possible framework for a more human-centered metadata tier is [Classical Rhetoric: Presentation, Style, Delivery, Content Structure, Speaker Authority](#) - those sorts of things. It's reasonably easily implementable. Speaker Authority, for example, could be number of RSS subscribers, the "about me" details, etc.

Does anyone have any ideas for other metadata frameworks that might help balance Dave's IT slant? Or do you think we should leave this metadata level to the IT agents and software alone?

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 5:20 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Some practical-ish questions - Dave Pollard

**From:** Dave Pollard

Subject: Re: IPKM: Some practical-ish questions - Piers Young

Piers makes a good point. [The way I envisioned the metadata 'layer' of a PKM/IPKM system being developed was by a dialogue between technology developers and personal content 'users'](#) (suppliers, authors of social network software, people who want to 'host' or manage online communities etc.) This is the process, I believe, by which the concept of 'cookies' (probably the most notorious and well-established metadata tool out there).

The tools would probably focus initially on two reorganizing schema:

1. Personal identity information -- Stuff about you that you've entered once, but keep getting asked to enter again and again in slightly different formats.
2. Personal content taxonomy -- Once you've organized all your personal content your own way, indexing it the way you like, the metatool would use natural language logic and semantics to 'map' that implicit taxonomy into a 'standard' taxonomy, so that if, for example, David Gurteen was looking for stuff on Personal Knowledge Management, the metatool would identify Personal Information Management as a generally-accepted synonym, and then find my stuff on Personal Content Management since the metatool operating on \*my\* content would identify Personal Information Management as a

synonym for PCM, and make the match. As a more robust example, if David 'permissioned' me to browse \*all" his content, the metatool would give me a "view" of that content that organized it the way I organize \*my\* content.

Although I've been involved as an advisor to several software companies that have developed metadata and indexing tools, generally run by experts in semantics, I confess I'm not an expert in the processes by which these tools work, and would welcome other ideas for the metadata 'level' in my model.

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 9:05 am

**Subject: IPKM: re. Practical-ish Questions - Paul Cripwell**

**From: Paul Cripwell**

Subject: Building a Personal Super Model

Piers Young's comments struck a chord with me when he mentioned frameworks and models.

The world is constructed of models and frameworks, from which we draw structure and reasoning in order to put everything into perspective and make it understood; both to ourselves and to communicate these ideas to our fellow humans.

This works well, for the most part, but [the problem arises when one structure/model/framework is imposed on a situation/organization \(etc\) and the particular model doesn't fit.](#)

After reading Piers' remarks it occurred to me that each of us takes each of these models into account and effectively constructs a super model. Now this super model really defies description and communication, since it exists only in our mind, and is amorphous. It changes as we view it, and it changes as we apply new logic to it. The super model occasionally gains solid structure as a problem is more clearly defined. It can be partially communicated to our fellows who, in turn, add constructs to their own super model, which looks nothing like our own.

IMHO the ability to see and use this super model is the key to enlightened thinking and the ability to apply knowledge to any situation.

Anyways, some musings for the group.

Cheers

Paul

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 10:16 am

**Subject: IPKM: Reader Levels Dictate Content - Piers Young**

**From: Piers Young**

Subject: Re: IPKM: Re. Some practical-ish questions - Dave Pollard

Dave's permissioning example made me think. One focus for Dave's metadata layer, and perhaps PKM/PCM in general (?) is how content is presented from "author" to "reader".

(An author, I'm assuming, can be anyone who comments, blogs, makes any sort of accessible content - from addresses to musings to fully fleshed academic tracts or business proposals)

Authors are pretty much black boxes. They write what they write and there's no sensible way of controlling them(!) (They can be trained to do it in structured ways - but I'm not sure that's the concern of the 3-tier PCM model.)

Readers, though, whether human agents or software agents can be analysed a little more carefully, and by doing so, it might be possible to add a fair bit more power to Dave's permissioning example.

There's one analysis I know of that could be especially useful. (It was by a Dutchman called Joost - I'll dig out the reference if people are interested). Roughly, it goes as follows. [There are four types of readers, all of whom are asking different questions of personal content.](#) (It is those questions that I think dictate the various different views of that content.)

The four types are:

- 1) knowledgeable readers
- 2) Semi-knowledgeable readers
- 3) Unknowledgeable readers
- 4) Non-readers

Knowledgeable readers know what they're looking for, have a good understanding of the author's field, and are able to ask specific questions of an author's content. So in Dave's permissioning example, he would be a knowledgeable reader of David's personal content.

Semi-knowledgeable readers are those who have some knowledge of a field, but generally look for "overview" articles in a constrained area. They may recognize some names, know some of the personal content, but they aren't experts. They look for general approaches, and ways of relating them to what they already know.

Unknowledgeable readers are learning from scratch. Questions are large, with few cues and introductions, diagrams, conclusions etc are most valuable.

Non-readers are pretty much admin. They're more concerned with the fact that an author has published personal content (e.g. aggregators)

I and I suspect most people have been (and will continue to be) all four types of reader at one time or another. Once, I'm e.g. permissioned, [I would really like to see the metadata layer do is not just help translate content taxonomies, but facilitate presentation of the permissioned data based on my needs as one of the four above readers.](#)

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Date: Mon Feb 23, 2004 6:11 pm

Subject: **IPKM: Re. Back to Practical KM - Dave Pollard**

From: **Dave Pollard**

Subject: Simple, intuitive personal content management tools.

Bravo, Jerry. I get so frustrated when we slide into academic and semantic debates, especially when our entire profession is in danger of going the way of TQM and BPR.

My post on Personal Content Management

<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/2004/02/18.html#a632> has received a fair bit of attention, notably from technology people, though, rather than KM people.

The idea is to have one suite of *\*very simple, intuitive\** personal content management tools:

- A Workspace Tool that allows the individual to organize, arrange, locate, save and manipulate content (documents, messages, directories) intuitively on a laptop, analogously to the way one does this in physical workspace, and
- An annotation tool that allows the individual to insert, delete, move, comment on, highlight and cross-reference electronic documents regardless of their native format, that is leveraged by a second suite of *\*very simple, intuitive\** social networking tools:
- An Expertise Finder, to identify people inside and outside the company with specific expertise or experience,
- A Network Builder, to identify people inside and outside the company with specific common interests,
- A Super Address Book, to automatically capture all the contacts in ones various networks, and all their 'numbers' and 'addresses',
- A Connector, to allow one-click access to people in the Super Address Book and provide laptop-to-laptop Simple Virtual Presence, so that the individual can contact, browse permissioned content, communicate and collaborate with others, while keeping sidebar communication channels open,
- A Publisher, to allow automatic sending of permissioned subsets of one's personal content appropriately to other people in a convenient format, and
- A Subscriber, to allow automatic reciprocal access to, and receipt of, other people's permissioned content

To me, these two sets of tools are the core of PKM/IPKM. I know several of you think I put too much emphasis on technology and tools and not enough on the 'softer' side of KM, but [I'm more and more convinced that providing people with simple, powerful tools](#)

would be more fruitful (and better-received) than trying to change the whole organizational culture, processes and behaviour.

I've been asked to review and evaluate two new tools that might provide much of this functionality. I'll be reporting on this later this week, but if in the meantime any AOK members would be interested in looking at these tools and providing your thoughts, I'd be pleased to pass them on:

WiredReach: <<http://www.wiredreach.com/>>

Chandler: <[http://osafoundation.org/Chandler\\_Compelling\\_Vision.htm](http://osafoundation.org/Chandler_Compelling_Vision.htm)>

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 9:00 am

**Subject: IPKM: re. Personal Tools Used in Knowledge Creation - Valdis Krebs**

**From: Valdis Krebs**

Subject: If I only had these tools in grad school!

Subject: Re: personal tools used in knowledge creation

A nice list Dave!

There are some new tools for both Windows XP and Macintosh OS X that meet some of these needs.

On Mac OS X I use two tools for organizing data/information...

- \* StickyBrain

- \* NoteTaker

I use the former to grab blocks of useful text and graphics anywhere I find them on my laptop screen -- web, emails, newsgroups, PDFs, Office docs. It has a simple search function to later find what I need... kind of the shoebox approach, but finding stuff is much easier! NoteTaker follows a notebook format, but you can also record/store audio and video on any notebook page. Anything can be linked to anything. Notebook pages can be saved as HTML and posted to the web. I have recorded meetings directly from my laptop and put that into documents. Microsoft has a neat new Project tool coming for their latest Microsoft Office product on the Mac, that does similar things to NoteTaker and allows you to link anything/everything on your hard drive/web to a current task/project.

On Windows I have seen two similar products, Microsoft's own recent Notebook? software and an interesting Java program that allows you to grab/index anything on the web.

If I only had these tools in grad school! ;-)

Valdis

Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 1:25 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Re. Back to Practical KM - Bruce Karney

**From:** Bruce Karney, Knowledge Management Consultant, HP Services, Mountain View, California, U.S.

Subject: Simple tools could include a viable economic system.

Dave Pollard's list of simple tools for knowledge workers is a good one, but I would add something to it: [an economic system that provides appropriate incentives for producers, "packagers", and consumers of knowledge and interpersonal connections.](#)

In order to create the viable economic system I think we will eventually need a new tool, but I don't know for sure what it will look like. My guess is that it will be some form of micropayment system, though it's possible it will be reputation-based system like Ebay seller ratings.

Cheers,  
Bruce

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 1:51 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: An Economic System for PKM? - Jerry Ash

**From:** Jerry Ash

Hi Bruce.

Thanks for your thought-provoking post. Unfortunately, many of us in this space are unable to read between lines otherwise understood by the more sophisticated among us. :-  
)

[What exactly do you mean by an "economic system?" Are you suggesting a way of monitoring or measuring personal knowledge, its intrinsic value or its contribution to measurable outcomes?](#) If the answer is any of these, then "economic value" to whom? Self? Organization? Society?

In my opinion, one of the "diversions" of KM over the past decade has been the quest for measuring intangibles the same way we have always measured tangibles (after all, we called it intellectual "capital" for awhile) -- using generally accepted accounting principles. Some have felt we had to create an "economic system" that would make sense to the CFO if we were to gain attention from management. In the process, some have looked at "knowledge" as an object, just as we do physical assets; others have argued that knowledge isn't a thing to be measured but a capability to be leveraged.

No matter where you fall on these issues, the reality remains -- we will have to convince everyone (individuals and decision-makers) that IPKM matters. Will an economic system do that?

Thanks again, Bruce. I hope I haven't muddied your waters!

Jerry

P.S. Please remember, we are focusing primarily on Personal Knowledge Management (PKM), not Corporate Knowledge Management (CKM) in this discussion -- though they can hardly be separated.

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:21 am

Subject: **IPKM: Means to an End; What End? - David Gurteen**

From: **David Gurteen**

Subject: Reply to Jerry on itangibles

Jerry you say:

"... we will have to convince everyone (individuals and decision-makers) that IPKM matters."

Seems to me in retrospect that this might have been a good place to start :-)

We have talked a lot about tools and personal motivation, disciplines and mindsets - all means to to an end ....

But what are these ends that we trying to achieve? Its these ends that will allow us to convince people that IPKM matters.

So what is it we are trying to achieve in terms of "Business" OUTCOMES? What's our "dream ticket"?

I'm not going to try to answer this just yet ... I need to reflect a little more on it :=)

David.

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Date: Tue Feb 24, 2004 9:29 am

Subject: **IPKM: We Are Not All Knowledge Workers? - Victor Newman**

From: **Jerry Ash**

Hi All.

Victor Newman, a previous STAR Series moderator, didn't exactly post this, but I read it on the Contents Page of the December/January issue of the ARK Group's Knowledge Management Magazine:

"The truth is that knowledge work is not democratic; we are not all going to be knowledge workers. Neither is everyone going to be predisposed or equipped to create, far less share, any real knowledge in a world that still confuses data and information."

Victor, who is a member of the editorial board of Knowledge Management, loves to jolt people, and that statement certainly got my attention! After all, in our book -- STARS of the New Order -- we say "there is no such thing as a NON- knowledge worker." At first blush, we seem to disagree.

But I think what Victor means is that [we are not all engaged as knowledge workers and the solution is to reframe the problem away from "how to share all the knowledge in people's heads" to "how to build something new through knowledge building."](#) He reasons, "We can ask people to empty their intellectual pockets and contribute the contents to the general good, or we can share a challenge, a journey to another place that will involve them in building and sharing tools that carry them towards their goal."

I'll try to bring Victor back to this space long enough to see how these thoughts relate to our own discussion on Inter-personal Knowledge Management.

Jerry

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 10:11 am

Subject: [IPKM: Re. We Are Not All Knowledge Workers? - David Jones](#)

**David G. Jones, Ontario, Canada**

Subject: Re: IPKM: We Are Not All Knowledge Workers? - Victor Newman

You quoted Victor Newman thusly:

> "The truth is that knowledge work is not democratic; we are not all going to  
> be knowledge workers. Neither is everyone going to be predisposed or  
> equipped to create, far less share, any real knowledge in a world that still  
> confuses data and information."  
>

[I can think of only one job that involves no knowledge creation, use or transfer. It is digging post holes and filling them again.](#)

DG Jones

PS The distinction between data and information is miniscule compared to that between information and knowledge.

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:11 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Defining Knowledge Workers - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

**Subject:** On Knowledge Workers

I was asked at a conference some time ago to define a knowledge worker and I tried to draw a distinction between information workers and knowledgers workers. I ended up being verbally abused in the nicest possible way by several members of the audience who felt we were all knowledge workers and that we did not want to create a two- tier knowledge society of knowledge workers and some sort of underclass!

I still think, though, that if we decide we are all knowledge workers because we all use knowledge to a greater or lesser degree in our jobs then the term has little useful meaning.

Tom Stewart defined a knowledge worker thus in a recent conference:

"A knowledge worker is someone who gets to decide what he or she does each morning."

And I have, maybe, a more contentious definition:

"Knowledge workers are those people who have taken responsibility for their work lives. They continually strive to understand the world about them and modify their work practices and behaviors to better meet their personal and organizational objectives. No one tells them what to do. They do not take "No" for an answer. They are self motivated."

I think with this definition we could ALL strive to become better "knowledge workers" :=)

David

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 8:14 am

**Subject:** IPKM: Restoring Discussion Purpose - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

**Subject:** Have we lost the purpose of this discussion?

I've been away for two days as you all know and have come back to try to pick up the discussion but am having great difficulty ...

I think this is partly because YahooGroups is such a poor tool for this sort of discussion - without discussion threads and with long postings I find it very difficult to make head or tail of the different discussions taking place or starting up.

But is it just me or have we completely lost sight of the purpose of this discussion in getting into such a 'heated' and 'philosophical'debate about the nature of knoweldge! Its not that is not important but I don't think it should be the focus of this discussion on PKM/IPKM!

So as much as I am tempted to add my views on this topic I am not going to do so :-)

David.

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Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004 5:16 pm  
**Subject: IPKM: Last Chance to Post to David Gurteen**  
**From: Jerry Ash**  
Subject: Friday is the Official End of the Gurteen Dialogue

Hi All.

David Gurteen's commitment to the STAR Series ends tomorrow (Friday). Although he may hang around a little longer, if you want to be sure he will be able to respond to your message(s), now is the time to post it (them). But when the Guest Moderator is officially off the hot seat, it doesn't mean discussion cannot continue among you as long as you wish. Dave Pollard and I are working on the background material for his turn in the STAR seat beginning March 15. In the interim, you are encouraged to continue on the PKM thread or start new ones.

Thanks.

Jerry

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Date: Wed Feb 25, 2004 8:06 pm  
**Subject: IPKM: KM for the Individual Knowledge Worker - Judith Meskill**  
**From: Judith Meskill.**

Subject: Posting this to my weblog, on-topic newswire, thought i would post here as well.

FYI Jerry et. al.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. and LILLE, France, Feb. 25 /PRNewswire/ -- e.story

LLC today announced it is launching the industry's first Personal Knowledge Network at the DEMO 2004 conference. Personal Knowledge Networks (PKN) is knowledge management for the individual knowledge worker. PKNs are forecasted by Gartner Inc. to be the predominant knowledge management channel for individual knowledge workers to help them stay competitive, responsive and improve their productivity. "Today knowledge workers are experimenting and experiencing computer mediated social networks. e.story's LinkedMinds is the next step by enabling the networking of knowledge and ideas. Personal knowledge networks naturally ride on top of social networks to add value and drive innovation," said Chris Shipley, DEMO executive producer. Founded in 2001, e.story is a privately held software company enabling knowledge workers to easily find, share and collaborate on personal knowledge. e.story's LinkedMinds automates functions for search and information collaboration to increase worker knowledge and productivity. The subscription-based product is based on number innovative technologies including an inference engine, automatic thesauri and dictionaries and data visualization. "We are thrilled to be introducing LinkedMinds at DEMO and will be offering attendees a free one-year subscription to LinkedMinds," said Gerard Chalom, CEO and co-founder of e.story.

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Date: Fri Feb 27, 2004 4:38 pm

Subject: **IPKM: Progress of All Forms of KM Depends on the Other - Joe Firestone**

From: **Joe Firestone**

Subject: The New Knowledge Management, PKM, and IPKM

I'm surprised that no one has developed the implications of a complex adaptive systems (CAS) approach to Personal Knowledge Management during this discussion. Perhaps it can offer some help for thinking about this area.

The first thing that comes to mind as a consequence of such an approach is that Personal Knowledge Management (PKM) may be different from Inter-personal Knowledge Management (IPKM), and Enterprise Knowledge Management (EKM), simply because [individual systems, are different from interpersonal systems, and enterprise systems](#). I'll get to these differences later after I offer some theoretical development beginning with what I mean by 'Knowledge', Knowledge Processing, and Knowledge Management'.

Here I'll reflect the point of view of The New Knowledge Management (TNKM), a CAS-based approach to KM being developed by Mark McElroy and myself at the KMCI and The Center for The Open Enterprise 'COE'. In a previous message (see message 1353), I've defined 'Knowledge' as an encoded, tested and evaluated, and surviving structure of information that helps the system that created it to adapt. Knowledge Processing refers to the inter-related activities that produce such a structure of information.

New knowledge is a solution to a problem, and the aspect of Knowledge Processing that is devoted to the production of new knowledge, is a problem solving process. The problem it solves comes from ordinary purposive decision making and ensuing activity in what we might call 'operational' processes we use to acquire valued ends of various

kinds. Sometimes such decision making cannot proceed because the knowledge needed to make a decision cannot be acquired by using existing knowledge to monitor, evaluate, and plan one's actions. Existing knowledge is inadequate to support the decision. There is a gap between it and the knowledge needed to make the decision. This 'epistemic' gap is the 'problem' that Knowledge Processing must close.

Thus far I've distinguished inter-related activities forming operational processes, and other such activities forming knowledge processes. TNKM also distinguishes inter-related management activities that attempt to enhance knowledge processes and their outcomes. This, of course, is what we mean by 'Knowledge Management'.

I've now defined a three-tier model: operational processes and outcomes influenced by knowledge processes and their outcomes, influenced by KM processes and their outcomes. Mark and I frequently apply this model in analyzing enterprise systems, but I see no reason why it would not apply equally well to individuals, considered as complex adaptive systems, and interpersonal systems, considered in the same way. Let's begin such an application and see where it leads.

First, it suggests that PKM and IPKM are process phenomena in individual and interpersonal systems, respectively, and that these KM processes have the purpose of enhancing Knowledge Processes in these systems. What are the Knowledge Processes in these systems? What are their KM activities? And what are their important outcomes?

Second, In individual systems, Problem Claim Formulation, Information Acquisition, Knowledge Claim Formulation, and Knowledge Claim Evaluation, are important sub-processes in Knowledge Production. At the organizational level, a second knowledge process, Knowledge Integration, is very important for distributing knowledge. At the individual system level, however, knowledge must be organized and maintained through a process of Knowledge Storage and Organization.

The names of the sub-processes immediately suggest that I'm discussing only explicit Knowledge Processing of cultural products here. There's more to this than meets the eye, though. Individuals learn explicitly by forming, testing and evaluating beliefs as well as claims. And each of the above processes has a psychological (and not just a cultural/linguistic) side in which new beliefs are formulated, tested and evaluated as well. In fact, in Personal Knowledge Processing, our efforts to formulate new knowledge claims are in constant interaction with our efforts to formulate new beliefs.

In addition to the explicit learning of both the cultural and mental varieties that goes on these sub-processes, TNKM theory, suggests that individuals also learn non-explicitly from all activities they engage in, because the capacity to do so is inherent in our brains and associated biological systems. In fact, evidence from neuro-science suggests that all our conscious experience is accompanied by non-conscious learning that produces knowledge that is inaccessible to consciousness. And evidence from psychology suggests that this same experience is also accompanied by non-conscious learning producing changed mental predispositions (changes to our attitudes and values). So, even though

Personal Knowledge Processing is about problem solving and explicit learning, we must keep in mind that its products include non-conscious biological and mental knowledge as well.

Third, in performing these sub-processes and all other activities as well, individuals are embedded in a social, cultural, economic, and ecological, context containing multiple complex adaptive systems in which they participate throughout their lives, which affect their decisions and actions, and which they affect, with those same decisions and actions. Their families, enterprise environments, voluntary associations, nation-states, the international system, the world eco-system, are all CASs in which they participate intermittently from time-to-time. Individuals are at the nexus of these systems and must integrate all of their transactions with these systems in such a way as to maintain the individuals' coherence and identity. They use their knowledge to do this, and that is a large part of what adaptation is about.

Fourth, the important direct outcomes of Personal Knowledge Processing are knowledge claims and beliefs and reasons for thinking that one's knowledge claims and beliefs may be relied on in decision making. These claims and beliefs are stored in one's media (documents and information systems) and one's brain (memory). The combination of the two is called the Personal Knowledge Base (PKB). It is the PKB that individuals use in decision making.

Fifth, a classification of PKM activities can also be taken from TNKM theory. Specifically:

- Building Relationships with others practicing PKM
- Producing Knowledge about Personal Knowledge Processing
- Storing and Organizing Knowledge about Personal Knowledge Processing
- Crisis Handling
- Resource Allocation
- Changing Knowledge Processing Rules

A more detailed classification of PKM activities may be given by cross-classifying the PKP and PKM categories: e.g. PKM activities aimed at changing knowledge processing rules used in Knowledge Claim Evaluation.

I hope you can see that [the framework I've just given](#) is immediately helpful in clarifying some issues in PKM.

(1) It [suggests that PKM is 'social'](#) in the sense that all decisions and actions, including those involved in Knowledge Production, occur and are influenced by the social context, and therefore one can agree that 'personal knowledge is socially constructed'. But

(2) it also [suggests that PKM does not imply that Personal Knowledge must be socially validated](#). For one thing, the social construction of personal knowledge is not dependent on one social context, but on many. For another, the individual must integrate a variety of

socially constructed perspectives in evaluating knowledge and in deciding which knowledge claims and beliefs ‘match’ experience better than others. In performing this sort of activity, the individual acts as an autonomous system, and its knowledge claim and belief evaluation activity is ‘emergent’ and is influenced by differing social contexts, biological factors (e.g. synaptic structures and brain functioning), psychological predispositions (attitudes and values), and tacit, implicit, and explicit situational orientations.

(3) The framework also suggests some ideas about the current focus of Personal Knowledge Management Practices and Tools. I’ve not immersed myself in the literature of PKM, but I have the strong impression that its focus is on (a) tools for organizing information resident on one’s computer and retrieving that information as an aid in using it in decision making or developing new ideas, (b) tools for enhanced searching and retrieving on the web, and (c) tools for visualization of conceptual relationships that are useful in clarifying one’s ideas and developing new ones. The first and third areas overlap somewhat, especially in such areas as portal interface navigation tools such as The BrainEKP.

I also have the impression that \*PKM has thus far experienced almost no focus on tools, practices and procedures for evaluating knowledge claims and beliefs\*. This area is vital to PKM because it is about the quality of one’s knowledge and about distinguishing one’s knowledge from one’s information, and ultimately about making good decisions.

Another area that I don’t think is much focused on in PKM is resource allocation. Resource allocation is one of the most important activities in KM. At bottom it involves prioritization and risk assessment. But I haven’t seen much discussion of use of tools such as Expert Choice, and practices such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process in PKM.

Now, I want to take some time to look at IPKM, where TNKM theory, which was developed for EKM, may be even more directly applied. IPKM is about systems containing two or more individuals relating in a peer-to-peer fashion on an on-going basis. The formal hierarchy that exists in the enterprise is not there, and the scope of interaction in systems practicing IPKM is much narrower than the scope of interaction in enterprises.

The Three-tier model of TNKM can also apply to interpersonal systems, but Knowledge Processing and KM activities in the IPKM context are even more similar to EKM processes than are PKM processes. In the IPKM context, Knowledge Production includes: Problem Production, Information Acquisition, Individual Learning, Knowledge Claim Formulation, and Knowledge Claim Evaluation. Knowledge Integration is relevant to the IPKM context. Its sub-processes are: Knowledge and Information Broadcasting, Searching and Retrieving, Teaching, and Sharing. The Distributed Organizational Knowledge Base (DOKB) replaces the PKB used in the PKM framework. The KM activities in the IPKM context include: Building External Relationships, Symbolic Representation of Authority, Leadership, KM-Level Knowledge Production, KM-Level Knowledge Integration, Crisis Handling, Resource Allocation, Negotiating Resources

with others, and Changing Knowledge processing Rules. Mark and I have discussed this framework in our book *Key Issues in the New Knowledge Management*, Burlington, MA: KMCI Press, 2003, Chs. 1-6, and also in Excerpt #1 from the *Open Enterprise: Building Business Architectures for Openness and Sustainable Innovation*, Hartland Four Corners, VT: KMCI Online Press, 2003 (available at [www.kmci.org](http://www.kmci.org) <<http://www.kmci.org>> , [www.dkms.com](http://www.dkms.com) <<http://www.dkms.com>> . and [www.macroinnovation.com](http://www.macroinnovation.com) <<http://www.macroinnovation.com>> . You can also see some graphics at: [http://www.kmci.org/KMCI\\_brochure\\_1.04.pdf](http://www.kmci.org/KMCI_brochure_1.04.pdf)

Since Knowledge Processing and KM sub-processes and activities in IPKM are highly similar to those in EKM, it's not surprising that the techniques, procedures, tools and practices of IPKM are also highly similar. This is especially true in the area of informal structures and processes where CoPs, Story-telling, Knowledge Cafes, Facilitation methods, Collaboration Tools, and Social Network analysis would all be relevant. In addition, practices, tools, etc. that are important in PKM would also be relevant to IPKM since anything that enhances Personal Knowledge processing is likely to have a positive impact on IPKM.

The present state of IPKM is similar to the state of PKM in that Knowledge Claim Evaluation and Resource Allocation and Prioritization practices, tools, etc. are not well-developed. I think progress in these areas would be important for the further progress of IPKM.

Finally, though PKM and IPKM are often contrasted with EKM, I think the progress of EKM is related to the progress of both of these areas. The 'bottom-up' approach to EKM is essentially based on a similar insight, which recognizes that formal organizations are dependent on the enhanced functioning of individuals and groups, for their own enhanced functioning.

I am very much aware that this post has been very long and that many will probably not read it. For those who do, I hope it has provided some additional insight into both PKM and IPKM.

Regards,

Joe

[From Jerry Ash: Joe, I read it and I'll bet several others do also. Let's see if its meaning moves anyone! P.S. If a post is long because of wordiness, shame on you. If a post is long because of thoughtfulness, applause to you!]

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Date: Fri Feb 27, 2004 4:43 pm

**Subject: IPKM: re. Defining Knowledge Workers - David Jones**

**David G. Jones**

Subject: Re: IPKM: Defining Knowledge Workers - David Gurteen

David wrote:

> I was asked at a conference some time ago to define a knowledge  
> worker and I tried to draw a distinction between information workers  
> and knowledgers workers. I ended up being verbally abused in the  
> nicest possible way by several members of the audience who felt we  
> were all knowledge workers and that we did not want to create a two-  
> tier knowledge society of knowledge workers and some sort of  
> underclass!

I still think, though, that if we decide we are all knowledge workers because we all use knowledge to a greater or lesser degree in our jobs then the term has little useful meaning.

It is common nowadays to imagine - because computers are ubiquitous and we now spend more or less of all our days in front of these eyed colleagues - that we're something called "knowledge workers." (I think as I write this that if we were that darn knowledgeable, we wouldn't be working this way).

The real issue with the term "knowledge worker" is the assumptions that go with the term. For instance. Some folks link "global," "information" and "technology" to "knowledge work" without a second thought. Ergo, a "knowledge worker" is someone who does non-manual (intellectual, intangible, information-based) work using state-of-the-art technologies in a globalized environment.

And some do. Most do not.

Most knowledge workers use their heads 9 to 5 (and in distinguishing them from their physical labourer counterparts), after hours as well. It used to be management that couldn't leave their work at the office. Now knowledge workers take it with them as well, and many can't resist logging on to download some of that intellectual churning during their "off-time hours." I'm not suggesting the inability to leave the job is a necessary condition for knowledge work. But it is a common enough fact to warrant its mention.

There are other characteristics though that we might be able to roll up as general assumptions about k.w. [here's a start point statement about "knowledge work"](#):

1. The work involves a considerable amount of systematic informational searching, locating, integrating, reporting - resulting in business-useable knowledge creation which -
2. is routinely captured and transmitted to others -
3. by trained people who practice self- as well as institutional- learning -

4. using a suite of modern management practices, tools and processes -
5. in organizations that are fluid and adaptive, requiring continual worker adjustment and skills enhancement.

Well, that's a start anyway.

David in Ottawa

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Date: Sat Feb 28, 2004 9:15 am

**Subject: IPKM: re. re. Defining Knowledge Workers - Paul McDowall**

**From: Paul McDowall, Special advisor, Learning and Knowledge Management,  
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat**

Subject: Re: Technology and communities unnecessary for k-work

I would add a few things to what David (Jones) has provided. First, there is a high degree of thinking required and flexibility involved in what to do and how to do it. Peter Drucker says the key issue for KWs is to answer the "what is the job?" question. Let me give you a simple illustration. I can think of at least one job where I was an information worker - I processed paper. I didn't need to know/understand/learn about what was on the paper. I didn't need to judge whether the concepts or ideas represented on the paper had value or were accurate or were meaningful. I had no flexibility in what I did based on what was on the paper. I simply processed the paper, gathered statistics, tabulated, etc. You could say I was part of a production line for this paper. Someone somewhere may have needed to think about the content of the paper, and then act accordingly, but not me.

Second, I want to build on what David has said about [the problem with our assumptions](#) about KW. He points out several tangential ideas that have been tacked on to the concept of KW. [Oh, we say, a KW must work with technology. This is purely false. In fact, I would argue that true knowledge work needs no technology since it is an act of the mind.](#) [Oh, we say, a KW must work in a connected group/organization/society. This also is false. Thinking is essentially an individual activity, not a group activity. Creativity is a pure act of knowledge work and has been largely an individual result throughout history. Someone, somewhere gets an idea.](#)

The fact that someone has difficulty in defining or describing KW is not a reflection of its reality, it is a reflection that the person can not articulate the key elements. No shame in that, just the basic truth that we are not perfect. We need to think about what really, really, really constitutes KW and avoid all the baggage that usually gets included.

Cheers

Paul (also from Ottawa)

Date: Sun Feb 29, 2004 7:37 pm

Subject: IPKM: 'Knowledge Worker' Too Vague & Inclusive

From: Bill Hall

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] IPKM: Defining Knowledge Workers

I liked the concept of a "knowledge worker" when first encountered several years ago, but in practice it can be too vague and inclusive.

I find it useful to distinguish between knowledge consumers - i.e., those whose work or decisions depend on access to distilled data and information, and knowledge producers - i.e., those who themselves assemble, assimilate, test and transform data and information into knowledge, intelligence and wisdom that can be shared with others.

Obviously, in their personal life, everyone does both roles; but in an interpersonal or enterprise environment, "knowledge workers" may predominantly fill one or the other role. The two roles involve different personal skills and cognitive process, and the "personal productivity" tools the knowledge producer will benefit from using to extend his/her cognitive processes are likely to be quite different from those that will help the knowledge consumer.

Knowledge producers occupy roles such as analysts, tech & commercial writers, designers, planners, programmers, engineers, etc. Most "production" and "operating" roles are primarily knowledge consumers. Most managers depend on filling both roles as they respond downward to flows of data, information and knowledge from areas they manage and must respond to; and assemble and distil these flows for upward reporting.

Such distinctions help to clarify the personal skills, processes and tools that can help us in PKM, IPKM or EKM roles.

Bill Hall

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Date: Mon Mar 1, 2004 3:14 pm

Subject: IPKM: Knowledge Production v. Knowledge Consumption - David Gurteen

From: David Gurteen

Subject: knowledge production verses knowledge consumption

I quite like Bill Hall's distinction between "knowledge production" and "knowledge consumption" and agree we perform both roles and thus prefer this terminology to "knowledge producers" and "knowledge consumers".

It seems a useful distinction - as he says - when thinking about personal skills, processes and tools. Unfortunately I think far too much attention is given to consumption rather than 'creation'

David.

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Date: Fri Feb 27, 2004 4:45 pm

**Subject: IPKM: What Are the Outcomes of (I)PKM?**

**From: Dave Pollard**

Subject: What are the outcomes of (I)PKM?

David rightly points out that one of our key objectives with PKM needs to be assessing its desired outcomes or 'value propositions'. In other words, what can it offer that CKM cannot? I'd propose these six for starters:

1. Improved effectiveness of increasingly specialized, mobile, business-critical, time-challenged front line workers
2. Lower risk that people will fail to consult with the appropriate people before making decisions, and hence better quality decisions
3. Lower cost of maintaining centralized web-sites and centralized tools and repositories
4. Greater currency of, and context for, what is stored in repositories, because it is maintained personally by the individual.
5. Lower cost of business travel, since PKM enables Virtual Presence better than CKM.
6. Improved knowledge-sharing with individuals outside one's own organization, since the tools and processes of PKM work as effectively outside the firewall as inside it.

The greatest challenge with PKM is that, to a considerable extent, PKM cannot be instituted unilaterally by a single organization -- the tools and processes need to be shared in common across organizations. Introducing PKM into your organization alone is like buying the first Fax machine in the world. But I know both Microsoft and IBM are looking seriously at developing PKM tools that will help establish this ubiquity of capability, upon which some very powerful PKM can be built.

Dave

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Date: Sat Feb 28, 2004 9:22 am

**Subject: IPKM: What Are the Outcomes of (I)PKM? - Joe Firestone**

**From: Joe Firestone <eisai@c...>**

Subject: The outcomes of (I) PKM?

Dave Pollard has proposed a very interesting set of possible outcomes of I (PKM). In reading them, I found myself in need of a much more detailed development of the reasoning behind each one and I regretted the brevity of his post. This was a case where brevity did not make for clarity, but where, for me, at least, it raised a lot more questions than were answered. Why?

First, the subject seemed to imply that the outcomes addressed would be both PKM and IPKM outcomes, but in proposing possible outcomes, Dave didn't make clear which would result from PKM and which from IPKM.

Second, the outcomes didn't distinguish between direct KM outcomes, i.e. those resulting from KM interventions on Knowledge Processing, and indirect KM outcomes, i.e. those resulting direct KM outcomes which, in turn, have direct effects on such value propositions as (1), - (5) below. [I think it's important to make the distinction between direct and indirect outcomes and to trace the flow from the KM intervention through knowledge processing and knowledge outcomes to business processing and business outcomes in order to really understand and evaluate the causal relationships being proposed.](#)

Third, I feel that Dave's proposed outcomes need clarification in the area of distinguishing "CKM" outcomes from I (PKM) outcomes. That is, Dave claims that the listed outcomes are benefits that we can expect from I (PKM) as opposed to CKM. He may be right. But, whether he is or not will depend in part on how one defines "CKM", or as I prefer, EKM, or OKM. That is, is there anything in the definition of "CKM" that prevents it from enabling IPKM or even PKM as a CKM intervention? If so, does this conclusion apply to all IPKM and PKM interventions or some of them? And, if some, which ones? I think these are all important questions that need to be answered before we view certain outcomes as attributable to IPKM or PKM to the exclusion of CKM that is appropriately conceptualized and implemented.

In The New Knowledge Management (TNKM), Mark McElroy and I have been developing a normative model of organization called the Open Enterprise. The OE is characterized by greater openness and self-organization in knowledge processing and such attributes as openness in problem recognition in business processes, openness to new ideas in Problem and Knowledge Claim Formulation, openness to criticism in Problem Claim Formulation and Knowledge Claim Evaluation, widespread trust in the CAS network underlying Knowledge Management, Knowledge, and Business Processing, Transparency in Knowledge Processing, and Inclusiveness in Knowledge Processing, among others.

Enabling both PKM, and certain types of IPKM, would be likely EKM interventions in encouraging the emergence of the OE. So in the Open Enterprise Model we may have a case where IPKM and PKM and the benefits of both, follow on a particular type of EKM policy, that of transitioning from other forms of organization to the Open Enterprise.

Regards,

Joe

[NOTE: Joe, you and other members will have an opportunity to explore Dave Pollard's positions further when Dave's "Preparing for Conversations with Dave Pollard" pages go

up on the AOK Web page Monday. Dave is our STAR Series moderator, March 15-26. - Jerry Ash]

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Date: Sun Feb 29, 2004 7:40 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: Managers Lack Self-confidence 'Openness' Requires - Bob Parden

**From:** Bob Parden

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 331

"Openness " is Utopia only for the highly self-confident. Few managers can handle it.

Bob Parden

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Date: Mon Mar 1, 2004 3:20 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: On openness - David Gurteen

**From:** David Gurteen

Subject: On openness

Bob Parden said :

>"Openness " is Utopia only for the highly self-confident. Few >managers can handle it.

It reminded me of a story at Lotus Development back in about 1990. An early Lotus Notes based discussion forum had been set up called "the Lotus Soapbox" in which people could discuss pretty much what ever they wanted.

A lot of questions were asked about the organization's direction and discussion took place -- much of it critical but not what I would call highly critical. I was surprised and pleased that senior management did not seem to be threatened by this "openness" and let the soapbox continue.

But not for long. One day it was closed down with a note that it was taking up too much space on the server!!! I never did believe that.

But it's not so easy to stop people talking these days ... websites such as <http://www.fuckedcompany.com> allow us to talk 'off-line.'

I think we are all going to have to get used to living with a very high degree of 'openness' :=)

David.

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Date: Mon Mar 1, 2004 3:25 pm

**Subject:** IPKM: re. Outcomes of (I)PKM - David Gurteen

**From: David Gurteen**

Subject: Outcomes of (I)PKM

Its a shame this dicussion is coming to a close ... I'd love to discuss these outcomes more but have little time and do not wish to open up the discussion widely at this stage.

But a few comments on Dave Pollard's suggested outcomes:

>1. Improved effectiveness of increasingly specialized, mobile, >business-critical, time-challenged front line workers

Would agree with this one.

>2. Lower risk that people will fail to consult with the appropriate people >before making decisions, and hence better quality >decisions

This one I very much like as the cause and effect are clear.

>3. Lower cost of maintaining centralized web-sites and centralized tools and >repositories

>4. Greater currency of, and context for, what is stored in repositories, >because it is maintained personally by the individual.

I assume 3 and 4 are a result of repositories being more distributed and less centralised.

>5. Lower cost of business travel, since PKM enables Virtual Presence better >than CKM.

This one I just can't buy into. Seems to me that the more you meet people in virtual space and get to know them and the more you work in virtual in space and get to know more people! Then the more things you want to work on and collaborate together and thus the greater the need/desire to meet face to face. Has anyone got any evidence that virtual working has actually decreased business travel?

>6. Improved knowledge-sharing with individuals outside one's own organization, >since the tools and processes of PKM work as effectively outside the firewall >as inside it.

Agreed.

But **I still think a lot of work needs to be done on all these outcomes.** For any suggested outcome - I'd suggest asking the question "So?" To me a "business outcome" needs to be measurable in some way and clearly contribute to the objectives of the business. Another good question is "if this was happening - what would look different?"

"Improved knowledge sharing" isn't an outcome in this sense.

David.

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