



## Conversations with Melissie Rumizen

*Knowledge Strategist, Buckman Laboratories*

*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 Oct 19, 2003 7:25 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Welcome Melissie Rumizen**

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STAR Series with Melissie Rumizen  
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From: **Jerry Ash**

Please join me in welcoming Melissie Rumizen, knowledge strategist at Buckman Laboratories, practical curmudgeon and author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Knowledge Management," <<http://www.kwork.org/Store/featured.html>>

I am eager to see whether this discussion can come down from the KM clouds to the basics of KM as an applied practice. As I have written in my other introductions of Melissie Rumizen, she is a complex mix of theory and practice that could help us translate all that we know into words that can be understood by those who need to know. Many of us -- myself included -- have difficulty finding those words.

Larry Prusak wrote this in the forward of her book:

"Written by an expert practitioner, this book cuts through the lingo that has littered the knowledge management field. Drawing upon years of experience, Melissie Clemmons Rumizen debunks some widely held beliefs and puts into perspective those that hold true under fire."

If you've missed my introductions of Melissie Rumizen in the EZine and in the STAR Series Dialogue section of the Web site, here's the skinny:

She describes herself as a rabbleroising would-be mongoose, a former German and Russian linguist with the U.S. Army, part of the catalytic team that turned the National Security Agency toward KM in the late 90s, and most recently the creator and manager of Buckman Labs' award-winning KM Website <<http://www.knowledge-nurture.com>>.

If you haven't done your homework, please go to Melissie's AOK page for the full bio and opening thoughts -- "Preparing for Conversations with Melissie Rumizen:"

<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/rumizen.html>

Melissie, thanks for the gift of your time and talents. Everyone, please make this a Dialogue. And, enjoy.

Jerry

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Date: Sun Oct 19, 2003 8:33 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do?**  
From: **Jerry Ash**  
Subject: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do

Hi Melissie.

I enjoyed reading your opening thoughts in "Preparing for Conversations with Melissie Rumizen" in the STAR Series Web pages, particularly the lessons learned broken into overall, strategic and implementation categories. Are these the basics? When you get right down to it, do these lessons tell us all we really need to know to at least get off on the right foot? I realize KM is too complex to translate into an elementary cookbook, but are these lessons the basics we need to get us in the kitchen

Passion. Learning. Action. Longevity. Communities. Simplicity. SWOT. Flexibility. Connectivity. Self-interest. Risk-taking. Culture. Champions Heros. Are these the basics? Are they the \*only\* basics? And can we communicate them in a simple way without trampling on the complexity of each? Please show me how.

Jerry

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Date: Mon Oct 20, 2003 6:51 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do?**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do

Jerry,

Greetings from London!

In response to your question, I remember as a beginner in this field being overwhelmed by the possibilities. But what puzzled (and frustrated me) the most was choosing a strategy. If I had known then what I know now, I would have been [less desperate to be perfect, and more determined to be mostly right](#).

That said, there is still more that is important. That's part of the reason I feel [it is so important to have a KM team, not just a solo performer](#). The multiple perspectives, talents, and experiences are critical. It is hard for one person to know everything - or to keep everything in mind.

Cheers, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 5:05 am

Subject: **BASICS: Discovering Pragmatics or Rediscovering the Wheel? - Jack Ring [+Jerry Ash]**

From: **Jack Ring, proprietor, Innovation Management, U.S.**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS

I appreciated Jerry's encouragement to leave the fluffy clouds of theory in favor of the pragmatics of KM. Now I am confused. [Melissie's Lessons Learned seem more like Wheels Rediscovered because most of these lessons were pronounced in the 1960's, and again in the 1980's](#). Perhaps the 22 year sunspot cycle is driving this and KM just happens to be a current episode.

One point of confusion is the treatment of strategy. Strategy concerns the allocation (and scheduling) of the deployment of resources to opportunities. To say that there is no perfect KM strategy and then to say that one should pick the strategy that gets the most done for the resources available simply sounds like some other definition of strategy is being used here. What am I missing?

OBTW, the S in SWOT is the sign for Strengths, not Situations.

I suggest that although there might be only two 'primary' choices for knowledge propagation there are more choices than these for fomenting knowledge generation. For example, Contrarian thinking, which can be learned by most anyone, seems as valuable as Lessons Learned, After Action Reviews or Purposeful Reflection.

Although the astute management of 'knowledge production and utilization' has been around for many decades it seems to me that 'KM' is on the verge of making itself just another fad.

[**Jerry Ash:** Yeh, Jack, a return to basics does come off like a rehash, and Melissie is doing it because I asked. But she also volunteered to deal with the theoretical if that's where the group wants to go (and the group always goes where it wants to!) But, I don't think basics have to be, well, basic. KM has been a rapidly developing and free-wheeling strategy over the past several years. Have we been experimenting long enough to have learned in general whether there are universal basics -- starting points that have become accepted practice? Knowing that would not be reinventing the wheel; it would be following its tracks!

Nevertheless, please don't let my desire for simplicity hamper the discussion.]

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 5:19 am

Subject: **BASICS: Methods, Approaches; Not Strategy - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen** <mcrumizen@b...>

Subject: Re: BASICS: Discovering Pragmatics or Rediscovering the Wheel? - Jack Ring [+Jerry Ash]

Jack, I think that perhaps I should substitute KM methods and approaches for strategy. While strategy does indeed involve allocation of resources, I also think any strategy and the methods/approaches you choose to carry them are the results of much thinking, analysis and a bit of fortune telling.

I did indeed focus on the basics, as asked, because I often see beginners struggling with the plethora of KM methods and approaches. I remember feeling like a kid in a candy shop. Dare I suggest that at times we resemble those in IT who are fascinated by the technology? [My intent was to reemphsize that KM is a means to an end - nothing more, nothing less.](#)

Incidentally, we at Buckman have sometimes been dinged for focusing on KM, and not business. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 5:22 am

Subject: **BASICS: Teach Me About Contrarian Thinking - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Discovering Pragmatics or Rediscovering the Wheel? - Jack Ring [+Jerry Ash]

Jack, [I know nothing about contrarian thinking. Could you teach me about it?](#) I am hesitant to make any assumptions.

Thank you! Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 12:02 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Response from Recovering Answerholic - Jack Ring**  
From: **Jack Ring**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Teach Me About Contrarian Thinking - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie,

I am a recovering "answer giver," so it is not nice to entice me to 'teach' ;-)

I once knew an analyst at NSA who always asked, "what would happen if it ran backwards." Often this caused others to look at a machine (algorithm, theory, etc.) in new ways and realize strange new aspects. This was not "devil's advocate" behavior but went farther to cause new thinking.

Paraphrasing Einstein, to deal effectively with our problems we will have to approach them with a level of awareness higher than we had when we created the problems. Contrarian thinking helps one elevate one's level of awareness in specific situations.

Contrarian thinking is now popular in research, management, and even investing (in many ways, Warren Buffet has made choices contrary to "best practices.")

You can get into the depths of Hegelian, Janusian, etc. thinking with the book *The Paradox Process* by Derm Barrett, Amacom, 1998, but [you may want to start with a neat little article that I think conveys the essence at http://www.businessweek.com/chapter/jenrette.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/chapter/jenrette.htm)

Sidebar --- I'll bet that when you explore CT further you will end up saying "Hey, I do this, too" which, of course is Valdis' quadrant #2 which, in turn, is a major mode by which "KM" practitioners can add value to their organization.

cheers,

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:35 pm  
Subject: FW: **BASICS: Dyslexic Approach to Thinking - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Response from Recovering Answerholic - Jack Ring

Jack Ring wrote: "I once knew an analyst at NSA who always asked, 'what would happen if it ran backwards.'"

Jack,

Thank you! As a dyslexic, this is a natural approach for me, and I shall check it out.

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 20, 2003 6:51 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Improving Performance Through KM - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do

Jerry

A quick post script - in answer to the subject, [what this knowledge strategist does is look for opportunities to improve business performance through KM methods](#). Even with a company that has been knowingly practicing KM for eleven years, there are such opportunities. For example, several years ago Buckman implemented a simple planning tool, a shocking cultural change for an organization dominated by shoot from the hip sales people. We had great results. It wasn't good enough, in my book. As has been said, the best laid plans ..... We needed to learn from our actions as well as plan.

However, it was the perfect hook to advocate the after action review, to ensure that the planning would be followed by reflective learning. We added a fifth question (what would you do next?) to start the planning cycle again. And that story encompasses several guiding principles for me - what is the organizational context? What are the business benefits? How can KM methods be added so that they are a seemingly seamless extension of ongoing work? How we do make it easier for people to do their work, or to quote Drucker, to improve the productivity of the knowledge worker? The AAR sold itself to our associates because it made sense to them (Why didn't we think of that before, was a common reaction), and it was well worth their time.

Additionally, there is the ticklish issue of selection. Most organizations have a limited capacity for change. Considering that capacity has led me to propose a relatively limited number of methodologies to my CEO, Steve Buckman, as open minded as he is. To those who love to cook as I do, I'd compare it to looking at the spices available in my cupboard, and then selecting ones that will enhance a given dish. The possibilities drop dramatically once I think about the context.

One of my heroes (and friends) in this field is Mike Burtha. As head of KM in the enormous and decentralized organization of Johnson and Johnson, he initially chose only one strategy. But that one was extrardinarily right for J&J, and most productive.

Cheers, Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 20, 2003 6:52 pm

Subject: **BASICS: K-Strategist Guides, Implements Corporate KM - Jack Vinson**

From: **Jack Vinson, KM, Pfizer**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do

I'll jump.

What does a strategist do? Their role is to guide the organization -- get the organization moving in the right direction, based on the needs and overall direction of the organization.

So a knowledge strategist does this for the "knowledge" of the organization. [What knowledge is important to the organization? How is it communicated, stored, created? What processes support the knowledge of the organization](#)

And, of course, once these things are identified (and monitored, since the direction shifts from time to time), the strategist also gets to work with the organization to implment the policies, practices, tools, etc. that actually get the knowledge work done. Whee.

Jack Vinson

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 4:54 am  
Subject: **BASICS: Change Requires Learning - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: K-Strategist Guides, Implements Corporate KM

[Jack Vinson wrote that a knowledge strategist does for knowledge what a business strategist does for business -- guide the organization.]

Brillant! In my class, as I am part of our Learning Center I'm also involved in the learning aspects. I think this is great, as any change requires training. I also believe that the principles of adult learning (hail and praise to Malcolm Knowles) help us to understand how to train and set up work for the KM worker. And best of all, [any KM effort should involve continuous learning and creation of the critical knowledge.](#)

Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 20, 2003 6:51 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: What Is the First Basic Step? - David Youngman [+Jerry]**  
From: **David Youngman, IT Training Consultant, HR, World Vision Australia**  
Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 257

Hi Jerry,

Not sure if this is the way to contribute as it is my first attempt! Following on from your question, I was wondering if Melissie had an order of precedence or priority for the basics. [What is the most common first step for a Knowledge strategist and what tends to follow?](#)

Thanks,

David

[**Jerry Ash**: It is the perfect first step, David. You asked the question I dared not ask because mine was too complex! -- "List the top 10 Basic steps in order." Yours is best -- one step at a time! Go for it Melissie!]

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 5:17 am

Subject: **BASICS: First Steps - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry]**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: What Is the First Basic Step? - David Youngman [+Jerry]

David,

It's good to hear from Down Under! We have a company (Buckman Labs) in Wagga Wagga, which I've visited.

To quote one of my favorite American philosophers (and ball players) - [You can observe a lot by watching](#). Yogi Berra.

1. You need to do an overall assessment of how knowledge is fostered- what is the current state? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
2. And like any other strategic planner, you need to think through the same issues for the company. Keep in mind that once KM goes on the table, it can drastically affect the overall organizational strategy.
3. Finally, you need to assess the SWOT of your personal situation in the organization. Are you well connected? What sort of clout do you have? What resources (human, financial, time) do you have? I've lost count of the people who have told me that they're in charge of KM but that they have no budget and no people. What can you accomplish in the short term, medium term and long-haul
4. Once you have observed, then stock up on your chutzpah. Gird your loins. Brace yourself for resistance for such is the nature of change.
5. Then you put together a plan, a strategy and a sales pitch. Cheers,

Melissie

[**Jerry Ash**: Parden my interruption, but it seems the right time to note that when you went to Buckman Labs in 1997 you inherited a company that had been on the KM trail longer than most and, I assume, Buckman people were as KM-savvy as any network of

people in the world. That said, I wonder if you found communicating and gaining acceptance for new strategies at Buckman was easier than in other venues, and how would you compare that with some of the other organizations you have learned about since?]

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 5:43 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Seven Steps - David Jones**

From: **David Jones, Strategic Policy and Planning Branch / Sous-direction de la planification et des politiques stratégiques, RCMP-GRC**

Subject: Basic Steps in KM Strategic Planning / Development

1. Know who you are.
  2. Know where you are.
  3. Know where you are wants to be.
  4. UNderstand your place in that cosmos.
  5. Know when to act and when not to act.
  6. Know well what means and how one does "strategic intervention" and "strategic avoidance."
  7. Know when to go.
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Date: Wed Oct 22, 2003 2:53 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Choosing Battles Carefully - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Seven Steps - David Jones

David, Succint, pointed and safe. Brilliant! May I quote you

In addition to the other fine points you make, I am struck by the obvious warning to choose your battles carefully. Yes, [we must choose - CAREFULLY - when to intervene](#). At times that is terribly difficult for me, as I see so many possibilities You aren't by any chance the DJ Jones I met with the Manchester police five years ago? I proudly display my Lancashire police momentos in my living room. If you are that DJ Jones, how do you wind up with the RCMP

Warm regards from London, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 7:09 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Listen, Enquire, Learn, Act (LILA) - Judith Meskill**

From: **Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: BASICS: First Steps - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry]

> To quote one of my favorite American philosophers (and ball players) - > You can observe a lot by watching. Yogi Berra.

Wow. This discussion certainly has gotten off to a whirlwind start! But I'll give it a twirl and jump in here.

On observing, and listening...

Whenever we launch a new KM effort, we have a "come to the business strategy" meeting in which we ground folks in "LILA" - Listen, Inquire, Learn, and \_then\_ Act. Most folks normally skip the middle part and go through endless trial and error cycles of Listen, Act. A lack of Inquiry and Learning can fatally hobble a business strategy's implementation.

Which brings me to my "KM basics" question Melissie. Which simple tools - like LILA - have you found to be most productive in your KM efforts

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Wed Oct 22, 2003 2:58 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Simpler Is Better - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Listen, Enquire, Learn, Act (LILA) - Judith Meskill

Judith, I like that even better than the Shewhart cycle - Plan, Do, Check and Act.

I've already mentioned my favorite yet simple, easy tool - the After Action Review as developed by the US Army and used by others to include BP and Sprint.

It is similar to Check - you talk about what happened and uncover learnings. It is quick. It is simple, deceptively so. But the underlying thinking and the power are amazing.

To give you an idea of how deceptively simple it is, our leadership team used it to discuss an important effort, which had its flaws. It was against their norms at the time to openly admit mistakes among their peers and in front of the CEO and Chairman. The CEO was surprised at how open the discussion was. He said to me, "It made it safe for us to talk about those things." I answered, "That is one of the things it is supposed to do. It worked. I'm glad."

To this day, I'm not mentioned Chris Argyris, double-loop learning or reflective thinking. But I've had the extreme pleasure of seeing how that simple tool has been adopted across our company. It is making a difference.

In fact, I actually believe that simpler things are best. Our brains have a bottle neck in short term memory - we can remember only five things, plus or minus two. I try to limit all process, strategies, etc. to five things or less. Not only can I remember that many (on good days....) but so can everyone else.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:43 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Charismatic Learning Experts, Anyone? - Judith Meskill**

From: **Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: Simpler Is Better - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie wrote:

> I like that even better than the Shewhart cycle - Plan, Do, Check and > Act.

Thanks Melissie...

"LILA" actually comes from Dr. James Milojkovic [<http://www.knowledgepassion.com/>] Milo is a corporate psychologist whose assistance was immeasurable in helping to create the mindset necessary to move away from "ego centric" work behaviour into "business strategy centric" activity.

In your KM efforts, as well as anyone else's in this group of KM doers, [have you ever made use of any "charismatic learning experts,"](#) such as Dr. Milojkovic, to achieve your KM goals

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 6:08 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Principles of Andragogy, Adult Learning - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Judith,

[In our learning center \(and in my prior work\) we follow the principles of andragogy, adult learning. The pioneer in that area was Malcolm Knowles, whose classic, The Adult Learner, is still in print \(and sitting upon my desk.\) The basic principles are:](#)

1. The need to know Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.

2. The learners' self-concept. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them.

3. The role of the learners' experiences Adults come into any education activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from children. That means that in any group of adults there will be a wider range of individual differences that is the case with a group of children. This means there also is a greater need for individualization of teaching and learning strategies. Additionally, for many kinds of learning the richest resources for learning resides in the learners themselves. Hence, the emphasis in adult education is on experiential techniques -- techniques that tap into the experience of the learners, such as group discussion, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, case method and laboratory methods instead of transmittal techniques such as presentations. Also, greater emphasis is placed on peer- helping activities.

4. Readiness to learn Adults become ready to learn the things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations.

5. Orientation to learning Adults are life-centered, task-centered or problem-centered in their orientation to learn. They are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with real-life problems. Furthermore, they best learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations.

6. Motivation While adults are responsive to some external motivations, such as better jobs, promotions, higher salaries and the like, the most potent motivators are internal motivations. These include the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 7:05 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Current-future State Segue of KM Strategy - Greg Timbrell**

From: **Greg Timbrell, lecturer, Queensland University of Technology, Australia**

Subject: Current-future state segue of KM Strategy

Hi. This is my first post to this forum, so here goes.

A wiser but not greyer colleague of mine once told me that if strategy were easy everyone would do it well and all business functions would prosper.

Jack mentioned contrarian thinking and I agree that it's a good technique for strategy formulation. In using contrarian thinking and other ways of approaching KM strategy, however, it requires the strategist to understand the "current state" from a knowledge perspective (as you quite rightly point out Melissie).

Unlike process engineering methods, the knowledge "current state" is mostly invisible; tangible and perceived only through the demonstrable knowledge activities or assets of the firm's stakeholders. Knowledge mapping techniques and audits are sometimes helpful but not always. Sometimes planning participants do not have knowledge perspective skills.

So Melissie, my questions are: [how do you assess the relevance of the `current state' analysis?](#) Are there times when you just put it aside and consider `future state' without reference to the `current state'?

I do not mean this to be a theoretical question. Rather it's a "how do you really do it" question.

Regards Greg

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Date: Wed Oct 22, 2003 2:56 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Assessing the As Is - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Current-future State Segue of KM Strategy - Greg Timbrell

Greg,

In a former life I once did a limited assessment of the As Is (admittedly flawed, definitely limited and all too short) which I had to deliver to the head of my organization. I was shocked at how much had been going on of which I was clueless and how quickly broad themes (gaps, weaknesses, opportunities, i.e. the classic SWOT) emerged.

I remember that when I think I can skip an assessment. I also am reminded of a quadrant, of which I can remember three parts (my hairdresser covers my grey!): what we know, we don't know and (the dangerous one) what we don't know we don't know. I always hope to uncover that last one, but reality forces me to do the best I can.

[There is one clear case in which it would be madness not to do an assessment of the As Is - when coming into a new organization.](#) The process also helps you to meet people and ask the Emperor Has No Clothes on questions.

Cheers, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:57 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Risk Assessment to Reveal Lack of IC - Jack Ring**

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Current-future State Segue of KM Strategy - Greg Timbrell

The more foolproof way to determine 'current state' is to make 'know how' a specific factor in the risk assessments that are done with respect to enterprise objectives and goals. Just as a risk assessment reveals the lack of other resources so too can it reveal the lack of intellectual capital or however you want to label the asset. True, the state of the knowledge asset is hard to verify. But the value is not in the asset, the value is in the organization's ability to apply the asset in pursuit of valuable results.

This, of course, means that current state must be determined relative to some needed state (which is hypothesized during analysis of the implications of the objective or goal).

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:44 am

Subject: **BASICS: Always Look for the Root Causes - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Risk Assessment to Reveal Lack of IC - Jack Ring

Actually, I once did an assessment in which the desired state was rather vague. We used the Sveiby model of intellectual capital. We could see gaps in some various aspects, which eventually summed up to the organizational equivalent of a runaway train. **The end result was that goals were not met. But the root cause was an imbalance in assets/resources/development of forms of capital.** The desired state was an end note, as there were other goals not explored that were also not being meant (met?).

It was most interesting, and a reminder to me to always look for root causes.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 7:03 am

Subject: **BASICS: Assessment - Valdis Krebs**

From: **Valdis Krebs, founder/owner, orgnet.com (SNA)**

Subject: Re: Assessment

Quote:

> In a former life I once did a limited assessment of the As Is > (admittedly flawed, definitely limited and all too short) which I had > to deliver to the head of my organization. I was shocked at how much > had been going on of which I was clueless and how quickly broad > themes (gaps, weaknesses, opportunities, i.e. the classic SWOT) > emerged. >> I remember that when I think I can skip an assessment.

**Yes, assessment is SOOOOOOOOOO important but most people want to skip it or skate over it quickly.** Many clients don't want to take part, or contribute to the assessment, it's "Tell us what's wrong and fix it... by the end of the week". My most successful clients dive into the assessment and emerge as the key assessors with the new knowledge/feedback I provide them.

The 4 quadrants I use are... 1) What we know we know 2) What we don't know we know  
3) What we know we don't know 4) What we don't know we don't know

Valdis <http://www.orgnet.com>

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:40 pm  
Subject: FW: **BASICS: Assessment - Valdis Krebs**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: Assessment - Valdis Krebs

Thanks, Valdis!

By the way, I was just at a CoP conference in London and one of your clients praised your work during their presentation. Social network analysis was a topic raised several times. Warm regards,

Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 5:19 am  
Subject: **BASICS: The KM "Lens" - Patti Anklam**  
From: **Patti Anklam**  
Subject: The KM "lens"

Melissie,

Great to see (hear you? read you?) back in action. And what a great dialogue! What's intriguing me at the moment is the natural translation of business strategy methods to KM. I've always had the most success "explaining KM" to people who are struggling with the distinction by suggesting that it is a lens through which you can look at any number of business issues, processes, problems, systems, and so on. Just think about the knowledge (human, structural) aspects of it. That seems to help. [Using the language of business strategy also helps bridge the cultural problem \(as you have practiced by not using the 'k' word, etc.\)](#)

At Digital/Compaq, I found that the principles and methods of solutions architecture as practiced there were also extremely helpful in designing KM programs. The basics of that approach:

1. Business view (why). Understand the business context, the problems, and the principles under which the business operates.
2. Functional view (what). Who are the users of the system? What will the system enable them to do, to achieve their personal business goals and objectives?
3. How will you provide the functions? What techniques, practices, technologies need to be available? What currently exists that can be leveraged?

What are the tools available and what new tools need to be created. (In your metaphor, we'd be looking for more ingredients for your special recipes.) 4. Implementation view. Who needs to do what by when to operationalize the architecture

All of these steps are instantiated with models and principles.

In the interest of simplicity, I rarely reveal that I am using this solution architecture methodology, but, like strategy process, it's just something I do.

cheers

patti

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:29 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Don't Leave out the Serndipitous! - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen** <mcrumizen@b...>  
Subject: Re: The KM "Lens" - Patti Anklam

Patti,

Thank you for more to steal!

The one thing I might add is a step five, make clear the expected and unexpected benefits. I believe in system thinking, and [one thing I have learned in KM is to look for serendipitous outcomes](#) (as well as the unplanned and less than delightful outcomes at times.) My example is that I had learned a relatively restricted way to use the AAR. We now use it broadly in all sorts of ways I never would have thought of, but applaud. And ACT like you expected all of it to happen.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 8:43 am  
Subject: **BASICS: A Place for the Unexpected - Patti Anklam**  
From: **Patti Anklam**  
Subject: Re: Don't Leave out the Serndipitous! - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie,

You are so right about allowing for and even anticipating serendipity. The architecture gives you a framework that creates a common language. It's just the underpinning. And [if it's good enough, then when the great "unexpected" happens, you have a place for it in the architecture, and you can, as you say, "act as if you expected it to happen."](#)

Cheers

Patti

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 9:29 am  
Subject: **BASICS: Do You Use the "K Word at Buckman? - Sam Marshall**  
From: **Sam Marshall, Unilever**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: What Does a Knowledge Strategist Do

Hi Melissie and All

My own take on what a knowledge strategist does is that they look at a business strategy from a knowledge perspective, just as other specialists look at the same strategy from a financial, risk or marketing perspective.

Therefore, I'm not sure there should ever be such a thing as a 'KM Strategy'.

I know that Buckman never used to use the 'KM' term internally, but is that still the case Melissie? Would your average Buckman employee be aware that their company had such a thing

Kind regards

Sam

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Date: Wed Oct 22, 2003 2:51 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Focus on Business Strategy - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Do You Use the "K Word at Buckman? - Sam Marshall

Hi, Sam! I see that you are speaking at KM World Asia. Congratulations! You have a good story to tell.

We still do not use the K word at Buckman. Nor do we use communities of practice. And my boss has cautioned me NEVER to use the phrase reflective learning, although we have internalized the AAR.

My approach is as you suggest - focus on business strategy, business results and business sense.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 12:23 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: People Who Know, Be, Do - Sam Marshall**  
From: **Jack Ring**  
Subject: BASICS: Do You Use the "K Word at Buckman? - Sam Marshall

Right on, Sam,

Strategy is concerned with the deployment (and scheduling) of resources in pursuit of opportunity. An erudite manager knows that one kind of resource, in addition to financial, risk of performing as envisioned, market standing, relative productivity, etc. is 'know how' (aka common knowledge) and another kind of resource is 'learnativity' (aka learning ability --- the prospect of generating and utilizing know how not yet common knowledge).

[Any enterprise is populated with human beings and each human can be viewed as a package of three capabilities, Know, Be and Do. All three capabilities must be applied.](#) Knowing without the ability to Do and to Be is similar to a bank with lots of assets but no loans, thus no asset turnover. This, of course, leads to the specific measure of 'knowledge turns.'

Cheers

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Date: Wed Oct 22, 2003 2:52 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: No Action Waste of Time - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: People Who Know, Be, Do - Sam Marshall

Jack,

You remind me of a chap at Xerox PARC, Bob Bauer, who gave me the first definition of knowledge (back in 1995) that made sense to me - knowledge is information in context that enables a person to take an action.

[If there is no possible DO, we are wasting our time.](#)

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 5:20 am  
Subject: FW: **BASICS: Inherited Mature KM? Yes & No - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]**  
From: "**Melissie Rumizen**"  
Subject: Re: BASICS: First Steps - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry]

[**Jerry Ash** asked "when you went to Buckman Labs in 1997 you inherited a company that had been on the KM trail longer than most and, I assume, Buckman people were as KM-savvy as any network of people in the world. That said, I wonder [if you found communicating and gaining acceptance for new strategies at Buckman was easier than in other venues](#), and how would you compare that with some of the other organizations you have learned about since?]

Yes and no. We had (and still lack) a definition of knowledge management, communities of practice, and even what we deem knowledge. Our discussions and work have been couched solely in business terms. I would make the distinction that we developed a culture that was more supportive of collaborative work than many others, our social/work networks are densely connected, and we view ourselves as one, albeit global company. I contrast this with companies I know that have many international locations, but are NOT global.

Communicating and gaining acceptance for new strategies at Buckman with our new CEO, whom I regard highly, is both easy and tough. He is open to new ideas (minus KM jargon) and is willing to go with a return that is non-momentary. However, the links to our strategy, values and goals must be crystal clear; the payoff must be sufficient to warrant the effort; the strategy should be portable across the corporation. Additionally, as we have a number of change initiatives underway I always have to consider what our capacity for additional change is. I would say that the bar is justifiably high.

The reward for getting over it is that he is solidly behind the effort, and pushes for global implementation. He also shows his support for knowledge sharing. He reads the messages in our forums, occasionally comments, and supports our change efforts. In summary, I have to say that our history does not make it easier. Nor do I think it should. I like being held to producing business results.

Regards, Melissie

[**Jerry:** Then, is there such a thing as relying too heavily on the business model of KM? Bob always measured his ROI (Intelligence) in terms of the number of new products introduced. Is there a mix of explicit and non-explicit benefits to be considered? What exactly would the addition of the "soft side" of KM do for Buckman? How would you prove it?]

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:27 pm

Subject: **BASICS: More Than the Hard Stuff - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Inherited Mature KM? Yes & No - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]

Jerry wrote:

>Then, is there such a thing as relying too heavily on the business model of KM? >Bob always measured his ROI (Intelligence) in terms of the number of new >products introduced. Is there a mix of explicit and non-explicit benefits to be >considered? What exactly would the >addition of the "soft side" of KM do for Buckman? How would you prove it?]

I wouldn't say that you can rely too heavily on the business model for KM. And we looked at the percentage of sales from new products as a measure of innovation, but it has risen steadily for many years. I haven't heard it mentioned in a while, but I will check on that.

I think there is always a mix of anticipated benefits and surprises. But then again, [once we introduce change into a complex system we in actuality should understand that we can NOT predict all of the effects. We also need to understand that when we enable knowledge workers to be creative, they will take us places we had not thought of going.](#)

I think we already have some of the soft side of KM. An integral part of our knowledge sharing is our code of ethics. It helps make us a truly international company, for it applies to all of us. Violating our code of ethics, as Sheldon Ellis likes to say, is the fastest way to get fired at Buckman.

[**Jerry:** Ouch. Sounds bloody hierarchical! Is that code of conduct a guide or a directive?]

We have forums dedicated to social exchanges. One such forum is our breakroom, where anything goes. I have seen countless jokes, birth announcements, free kittens, reminders to give blood, and requests for the names of air conditioning firms. When I first joined Buckman, I thought it was a waste of company resources. But I understand now that we are building the social fabric.

I'll also tell you that a part of our culture that shocked me is that sales representatives, who do work like dogs, insist on having some fun added to the work. Having some fun is mandatory. This was a new concept to me, given my former life. Again, I remind myself that the social side enables the business side of KM.

[**Jerry:** Yes, I always enjoyed Bob's story about buying laptops for everyone and not worrying about whether they used them for fun as long as the technology helped them perform better! -- a welcome break from the Big Brother syndrome of the office.]

What we can show, as a result of such efforts, is an incredible density of social networks. I think a social network analysis would measure this, but we see it in action all of the time.

We also are accustomed to collaborating with anyone in the company. Last year I went to work with a prospective customer in South Africa. Just before my first presentation a local sales rep came in, and introduced herself. She then joined in during the presentation so we worked together fairly seamlessly. Our prospective customer thought we had worked together for years. While that was not so, we had a common culture, common strategies, common goals, and a common code of ethics.

I have seen such things happen many times. Our knowledge sharing has helped us to be truly global.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 6:06 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Code of Ethics Developed by Associates!!! - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen** <mcrumizen@b...>

Subject: Re: BASICS: More Than the Hard Stuff - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]

Good heavens, the Code of Ethics is the farthest thing from hierarchical! I have failed to communicate. My apologies.

The Code of Ethics was developed by us - the associates. We had face to face conversations around the world. We generated lists of words (representing values) that came out of the discussions. We reduced the lists iteratively. This formed the basis of our Code of Ethics.

It applies to all of us. Recently a general manager of an operating company violated the Code, behaving in a fashion which was unfair to the associates. He was fired. Our CEO explained that even though the general manager was running a profitable company, he, too, had to abide by the Code. I viewed this as a clear example of our CEO, Steve Buckman, meeting Jack Welch's test of leadership. He talks about two attributes: performance and attitude.

1. If someone has good performance + good attitude, no problem. 2. If someone has poor performance + good attitude, you coach. 3. If someone has poor performance + poor attitude, you fire. 4. (and this is the test) If someone has good performance, + poor attitude, at first you coach. If there is no change, you fire.

[Here is the Code:](#)

Because we are separated - by many miles, by diversity of cultures and languages - we at Buckman need a clear understanding of the basic principles by which we will operate our company. These are:

That the company is made up of individuals - each of whom has different capabilities and potentials - all of which are necessary to the success of the company.

That we acknowledge that individuality by treating each other with dignity and respect - striving to maintain continuous and positive communications among all of us.

That we will recognize and reward the contributions and accomplishments of each individual.

That we will continually plan for the future so that we can control our destiny instead of letting events overtake us.

That we maintain our policy of providing work for all individuals, no matter what the prevailing business conditions may be.

That we make all decisions in the light of what is right for the good of the whole company rather than what is expedient in a given situation.

That our customers are the only reason for the existence of our company. To serve them properly, we must supply products and services which provide economic benefit over and above their cost.

That to provide high quality products and services, we must make "Creativity for our Customers" a reality in everything we do.

That we must use the highest ethics to guide our business dealings to ensure that we are always proud to be a part of Buckman Laboratories.

That we will discharge the responsibilities of corporate and individual citizenship to earn and maintain the respect of the community.

As individuals and as a corporate body we must endeavor to uphold these standards so that we may be respected as persons and as an organization.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 21, 2003 5:10 am

Subject: **BASICS: Compare J&J to Buckman Strategy? - Verna Allee**

From: **Verna Allee, previous STAR moderator**

Subject: Re: BASICS: K-Strategist Guides, Implements Corporate KM - Jack Vinson

Hi everyone,

Can't resist jumping in here if for no other reason than to attest that Melissie does indeed cook and being in Memphis she even barbeques! Her book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Knowledge Management* cooks in a different way of course. I recommended it both as a "first book" and also a "review" book for those who have been at it for awhile, but might have missed something. If you don't have it on your bookshelf - you should!

So, Melissie, getting down to specifics, [how does J&J's strategy compare with the kinds of things that work for you at Buckman?](#) Two very different organizations with very different context. Yet, what I am curious about is given all the differences are there some common elements that you and Mike have both found are absolutely essential? What was his "one" strategy and how did your own different approaches evolve? Do you have different ways of coming at KM with different parts of the organization

Verna

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 5:23 am  
Subject: **BASICS: Evolution vs. Methodical Development - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Compare J&J to Buckman Strategy? - Verna Allee

Verna, Mike's (Mike Bertha's) original strategy was a community of practice approach, which was also our initial approach.

I think we both use a Community of practice strategy, as we both are concerned with increasing connections, and transferring primarily tacit knowledge. Both of us are geographically dispersed, making it harder to connect. J&J is more decentralized, but we also have separate operating companies in other countries.

Ours involved out of a need for global email; forming the communities came from a fortuitous inclusion of a bulletin board system with the email capacity. Like Topsy, we just grew. J&J, who came along much later, took a deliberate and carefully methodical approach after much thought and benchmarking.

The root of one difference lies in our different sizes. Buckman, at 1400 people, has an easier time (although not easy) implementing across the corporation. J&J has relied more on opportunity. In sense, as their work has shown results they have gotten more internal business.

Our KM effort later evolved to include knowledge-based processes for working with our customers, as our strategy is customer intimacy. This was not a need for J&J, however.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:11 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Had You Been in Bob's Shoes? - Sam Marshall [+Jerry Ash]**  
From: **Sam Marshall**  
Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 261

Hi Melissie,

Thanks for a lively and engaging series. Bob Buckman's story of early days KM at BL is a compelling one. But as it was also pioneering, I wonder if, with the wisdom of hindsight, there are things that didn't go so well, or that you would have done differently if you'd been in his shoes

Kind regards

Sam

P.S. Thanks for the kind PR on my KM Asia talk :-)

[**Jerry Ash:** I have to mention that Bob Buckman will be publishing a book on the BL experience in a few months. I've had a chance to read the draft, and I'll be recommending it when it comes out! I'm not sure the Buckman story is the full skinny on KM, but Bob's initiatives on networking and knowledge sharing are critical components.]

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 6:11 pm

Subject: **BASICS: If Bob Stepped Back in His OWN Shoes - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Had You Been in Bob's Shoes? - Sam Marshall [+Jerry Ash]

Sam,

Bob himself will tell you that there are things we would have done differently. However, he and I do not agree on everything, so I have a few opinions that may vary with his. I do keep in mind that he had to make the decisions and it is easy to be a Monday morning quarterback.

A few things that could have gone better:

1. **We would have courted middle managers as part of the change effort.** They resisted with vigor. Some were coached, and changed. Others left the company.
2. **We would have recognized earlier that expertise in communities does not equal to expertise in teaming.** Organisationally, those are different skill sets. We know now that we need to be skilled at every form of collaboration.
3. **We would have paid more attention to the crucial differences in our cultures (country, geographical) and languages.**
4. **We would have paid more attention to role of customer service in addition to the role of our sales representatives.** They, too, have direct contact with our customers and are close to the front.

That said, keep in mind the landscape of 1992. Few companies had global email; few were developing communities, etc. I often say that when you are a pioneer there are no road signs to follow. Consequently, you do spend time on blind alleys, taking the wrong fork, and back tracking.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:16 pm

Subject: **BASICS: KM Fable -- Keith De La Rue [+Jerry Ash]**

From: **Keith De La Rue, Telstra, Melbourne, Australia**

Subject: (Slightly) Off-topic post

All -

As readers of the AOK EZine may have observed, [I have written a KM fable, called The Ivory Tower. This tells the story of a step-by-step, practical approach for gaining knowledge from experts and passing it to others who need it.](#) I would appreciate feedback on the story -- does it ring any bells with any other AOKers? Is there something you can learn from it

You can see it on my website at <http://delarue.net/what.htm>. (It is also linked from the AOK library at <http://www.kwork.org/Library/biz.html>.) Feedback can be sent here, or directly from my web site.

Keith De La Rue, <http://delarue.net/>

[**Jerry Ash**: Not off topic. You have attempted to translate and/or explain KM jargon using a fable. Have you used it yet? How's it working?]

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 8:31 am

Subject: **BASICS: Dealing with Bias Against KM - Alice Macgillivray**

From: **Alice Macgillivray, A/Director, Knowledge Management Programs, Science, Technology and Environment Division, Royal Roads University, Victoria BC**

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 262

I have a question for Melissie. Thank you!

Melissie, I love you for your pragmatism, and suspect there is a Melissie-philosopher under there as well! This question is prompted by the "K-word" discussions. Let me set the stage by telling a seemingly unrelated story.

Years ago, I worked on an interdisciplinary team that worked with public school curricula to try to ensure relevance for Aboriginal students, boys, girls, students from other cultures, and to include sustainability perspectives where appropriate. A science activity book for Grade 4 girls had been funded and field tested by the Ministry and was well-received by students and teachers. The funding had been approved because of research on courses choices and perceived career options by boys and girls. The book was a resource recommended by the interdisciplinary team, yet it was rejected by the resource approval group. Water cooler gossip suggested it was rejected because its for-girl bias violated the gender neutral policy. However, I eventually talked with the head of the committee and she assured me this was not the case. She said the book "cheapened" science by turning it into "kitchen science." I guess "kitchen science," which presumably has to do with health, family, women and unpaid work is at the opposite end of the status spectrum from "rocket science." So, might the book have been rejected because of deep, underlying and unstated biases

This story keeps creeping into my conscience whenever I hear things like 'we can't use the term knowledge, or "reflective" or "we have to be careful with the soft sciences" or "there shouldn't be KM degrees," or "we need clear cause and effect data on community benefits."

Under the water-line, [do you think we are dealing with major systemic issues and associated biases?](#) If you think so ... what next

Alice.

<http://www.royalroads.ca> <http://www.royalroads.ca/km>

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:41 am

Subject: **BASICS: Taylor "no"; Systems "YES" - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: Dealing with Bias Against KM - Alice Macgillivray

All,

By this time I've met Alice in person, which was delightful!

[One of the systematic biases we are dealing with still is to me the Frederic Taylor's view of organizations](#) - which I summarize to an extent as the mechanistic view of organizations. In work of physical labor this was a good model. In a world powered by knowledge (and connectivity!) this is not so. But many business schools continue to churn out those taught under this system. I'm happy to say that your university, Royal Roads, is not one of these.

I also am still amazed by those who do not embrace systems thinking. I am baffled by those who do not understand the importance of relationships, as witness the split between Firestone and Ford. And so. I'll stop now, lest I sound crabby...

Melissie

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 9:35 am

Subject: **BASICS: COP vs Team** - Jack Ring

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: COP vs Team

Melissie, Unless I have misunderstood, [you have noted that COP's differ from Teams or Collaborative Workgroups.](#) Would you please clarify the three or four top distinctions

Thanks.

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 1:01 pm  
**Subject: BASICS: Teams Finite; CoPs Fuzzy - Melissie Rumizen**  
**From: Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: COP vs Team - Jack Ring

Jack,

I am at the Nachotta Muckabout, a conference on communities of practice. This answer comes from the group:

Teams have shared, interconnected time-limited tasks; roles are ideally legitimized by the team or the organization, have finite boundaries.

Communities have fuzzier boundaries, share a goal of learning together around a practice rather than strictly task oriented, and may persiste over time.,

In "Cultivating Communities of Practice," (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder) <<http://www.kwork.org/Store/featured.html>> there is a chart that gives the difference between different types of groups: teams, communities of interest, CoPs, project teams, sustained teams and workgroup.

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 4:06 pm  
**Subject: BASICS: Look Forward to Evaluation of Muckabout - Jack Ring**  
**From: Jack Ring**  
Subject: Re: Teams Finite; CoPs Fuzzy - Nachotta Muckabout

Melissie, I greatly appreciate the response. In the midst of promulgating High Performance Teams, Hot Teams, etc., a highly constrained description of teams occurred and confused the marketplace. I guess teams had to be diminished so that CoP's could be the new, new thing. Just wanted to get clear on how you were seeing the two memes.

OBTW, I look forward to your evaluation of the Muckabout.

Cheers,

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:13 am  
**Subject: BASICS: Focusing on Similarities, Not Differences - Melissie Rumizen**  
**From: Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: Look Forward to Evaluation of Muckabout - Jack Ring

Jack and all,

Let me give credit to my muckabout colleagues (we harvested oysters, who live in a community, this morning as part of our discussion). They are:

Estee Solomon Gray John Smith Nancy White Teddy Zmrhal Lee LeFever Jim Palmer  
Alice McGillivray Frances Matt Sandy Bradley Larry Warnberg

I am doing a lot of thinking right now, mulling over the similarities between collaborative groups, not the differences. [I'm partial to the work of Roger Schwazz \(The Effective Facilitator\)](#) He talks about successful structure and group processes, which I am starting to think applies to EVERY collaborative group.

Disagreement and comment are welcome!

Melissie

P.S. Please be patient with me. I am unable to connect via the Buckman server (and thus can not do email); I can not connect via Wifi and an ethernet cable. I am using someone else's computer who lives on the Long Beach peninsula. Life (and connecting) is an adventure!

P.P.S. Evaluation to date of the Muckabout: fantastic. I am learning so much from the other participants. I have already made changes in my facilitation approach, to name one. I feel privileged.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 5:57 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Teams, Workgroups & CoPs - David Jones**  
From: **David G. Jones**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: COP vs Team - Jack Ring

Jack wrote:

> Would you please clarify the three or four top distinctions (between workgroups and CoPs)

[A workgroup or CoP may be institutionalized in concept, but in practice it is a fluid and unstable work unit.](#) There is minor rigor expected in either its structure or function. There is little definition around responsibilities and roles - even the role of leadership. They are useful for helping push a car out of the ditch or in managing an office pot luck.

[Teams on the other hand are established and operate only through a well defined and religiously administered set of principles and practices](#) - including intensive training and high performance standards. They deliver the high quality results that are expected of them, and then they disband.

Most organizations treat the notions of teams and teamwork quite casually, and they get quite limited results from their operation.

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 7:20 pm

**Subject:** BASICS: Distinction Between CoP & Group Grope? - Jack Ring

**From:** Jack Ring

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS: Teams, Workgroups & CoPs - David Jones

David,

Thanks for the quick response. I must say that the description of teams given here doesn't sound much like Hot Teams, or High Performance Teams, US Navy Seals, LA Lakers or the MJQ.

However, I understand that your description fits millions of instances throughout all the 'Voluntary Adult Detention Facilities' out there variously labeled corporations and governments.

Now I am prompted to ask, if youall will humor me, [What is the distinction between CoP and the classic Group Grope?](#)

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 9:00 am

**Subject:** BASICS: 'Team' and 'Group' Used Interchangeably - David Jones

**From:** David G. Jones

Subject: Re: Real Work, Emotional Reasons Both Touchstones - Melissie Rumizen

Extract from my study on teams and teamwork:

[Today's workplaces use the terms "team" and "group" interchangeably.](#) A good illustration of the fluidity of the terms comes from a hospital psychologist who said, "I don't see the team as a group. I see the entire ward as a group. We don't have a strong sense of identity; we are more members of a ward than we are members of a team. Our team task is very narrow: we get together once a week to develop treatment plans." (R.B. Shaw on Mental Health Treatment Teams, in Hackman 1990, 341)

David

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:14 am

**Subject:** BASICS: Continuum from Taxonomy to Ontology? - Melissie Rumizen

**From:** Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Re: 'Team' and 'Group' Used Interchangeably - David Jones

Yea, verily.....

However, I find that in real life it is sometimes hard to make the distinctions. [There seems to be a continuum](#), and at times I find it hard to differentiate absolutely. How have you found this in your practice? (pun intended.)

Cheers, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 8:14 am

**Subject:** BASICS: Teams & Groups Different as Night & Day - David Jones

**From:** David G. Jones

Subject: Re: Continuum from Taxonomy to Ontology? - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie wrote:

> Yea, verily..... >> However, I find that in real life it is sometimes hard to make the > distinctions. There seems to be a continuum, and at times I find > it hard to differentiate absolutely. How have you found this in > your practice? (pun intended.)

[I think teams and groups are as different as night and day](#) - and gave two workshops along those lines today in fact. Teams have certain needs around roles and definitions, purposes and objectives, methods of recruitment and training, leadership and values. Workgroups are a much more casual device that some may think are teams, but are only that - a group of people. The real problem is that people lay expectations on groups that they are simply unable to deliver.

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:28 am

**Subject:** FW: BASICS: Teams & Groups Different as Night & Day - David Jones

**From:** Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Re: BASICS: Teams & Groups Different as Night & Day - David Jones

David wrote:

> I think teams and groups are as different as night and day - and > gave two workshops along those lines today in fact. Teams have certain > needs around roles and definitions, purposes and objectives, methods > of recruitment and training, leadership and values. Workgroups are a > much more casual device that some may think are teams, but are only > that - a group of people. The real problem is that people lay expectations on > groups that they are simply unable to deliver.

David, I was thinking of two instances I often encounter - teams in workgroups and teams within communities. Teams in both settings can have needs around roles and definitions, purposes, etc. They are separate, yet still a part of the larger structure and subject to influences from that structure.

Perhaps in addition to defining the group parameters such as you list, it would be helpful in my practice to identify the context of the team/workgroup/community, and make it clear that teams can exist inside other structures. As indeed they do. And there I think we will meet as I agree that workgroups have different characteristics.

Incidentally, what I hope for within organizations is that we will better understand the characteristics of various (!) collaborative structures, how to manage and nurture them, and how best to use them. I am concerned that by concentrating on the differences (which are far from trivial, I agree) that we lose the underlying similarities of collaborative work. I would like to be able to develop a course that focuses on what would be foundational collaborative skills (participation, facilitation and leadership) that would be transferrable to all collaborative structures. I think there are some, but the literature seems divided by structure. I am still thinking this through at this time, my mind whirling busily.

Thanks for your reply, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:43 am

Subject: **BASICS: Real Work, Emotional Reasons Both Touchstones - Melissie Rumizen**

From: Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Re: Distinction Between CoP & Group Grope? - Jack Ring

Jack,

Many years ago during a former life I was part of a largely failed CoP program. When Bob Bauer of Xerox PARC visited, I wailed about it. He listened partiently, and then asked "Are you doing any REAL work?" We weren't. For many years that was my touch stone.

This year I learned to apply another touchstone. I've been working with two communities around the issue of palliative care. In those communities the emotional aspect of community is of equal, and at times greater, importance than the cognitive dimension. One community revolted (with gentleness, affection and humor) at my insistence on the administrivia (charter, incorporation, goal setting, etc) and insisted that every other meeting focus on our emotional reasons for participating in the community.

So now I look for both. In the corporate and government world we, too, have emotional reasons for joining (and mind you, I score the max on the Thinking portion of the Myers-Briggs indicator). **Maybe the ultimate lesson learned is that we as facilitators must be sensitive to the goals of the specific community.**

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 6:02 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Putting Value of KM into Words, Measures - Bill Hall**

From: **Bill Hall, documentation systems analyst, Head Office, Engineering**, Tenix Defence, Williamstown, Victoria, Australia

Subject: Key performance indicators for KM initiatives

Melissie and others,

My company is reasonably large ~4,000 staff, striving to grow and highly knowledge intensive. I am sure that it must be lovely to work for a company where the KM efforts are driven and nurtured from the top.

However, we are at a stage in our growth where most of our KM activities are still being driven from close to the problem areas rather than as an aspect of corporate culture sponsored and driven by the senior executives.

What we need is a language and means for people in the problems to clearly explain and demonstrate to our executives the value of proposed and current KM activities. Currently we often know we are right, but many aspects of KM addressing corporate imperatives are in the form of intangibles that cannot be readily or directly translated into shareholder added value.

One thought is that we may be able to use implement the idea of key performance indicators to give the executive a handle on what's working and what's not. [Are there any good examples showing how activities in the intangible area can readily be measured using KPI approaches.](#)

Thanks,

Bill URL: <http://www.tenix.com>

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:40 am

Subject: **BASICS: Acid Test - Use of Measures - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Putting Value of KM into Words, Measures - Bill Hall

Bill,

Long term I believe the best approach is to use a measurement system that is the organization's system, not a separate KM system.

However, it is a complex, multivariate world. It is impossible to completely separate out the difference made in a (complex) system from the impact of other variables. Nevertheless (to quote a country song) this is my story and I'm sticking to it.

Well, except for project measures. Often we implement KM as projects, and I do believe in also measuring progress, or changes along the way. That is because I want to be able to make course adjustments along the way.

Despite two graduate degrees in measurement and related subjects, what I never learned in school was that the acid test for any measure is what you can do with it. Regardless of the measure, I want to know

1. What will you do if the measure increases?
2. What will you do if the measure decreases?
3. What will you do if the measure remains stable?

I think that using an organization's measurement system often offers you the best chance (not certainty) of taking action. Not to mention communicating (a precursor to action, organizationally). Warm regards,

Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 8:28 am

**Subject: BASICS: More Questions & Actionables - Jack Vinson**

**From: Jack Vinson, Pfizer short-timer**

Subject: RE: Acid Test - Use of Measures - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie said: > 1. What will you do if the measure increases? > 2. What will you do if the measure decreases? > 3. What will you do if the measure remains stable? >> I think that using an organization's measurement system often offers > you the best chance (not certainty) of taking action. Not to mention > communicating (a precursor to action, organizationally).

Very important questions. This also suggests that we have done some study of what we "expect" those measure to do -- we have some history and we understand what the underlying process is capable of doing, whether that is a people process or a mechanical process. Frequently, it doesn't really matter if the measure increases, decreases or stays the same. It is too easy to over-react when the quarterly sales figures drop if one does not understand the underlying behavior of the system. If the underlying process is variable, then the measure will vary. Period.

The other important question to ask is what do you want from the process? How would you like it to behave? Does the measure help you see this behavior? Are you asking the process to do something it cannot do (asking too much of it, or asking for too little variability)

This leads the way to improvements. If the process is not behaving to your standards, then something needs to be adjusted: either the process or your expectations. But you can

only discover this if you understand both what the process can deliver and what you (or your customers) need from it.

Jack

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:29 am

Subject: **BASICS: Steps in Classic Measurement Process - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: More Questions & Actionables - Jack Vinson

> Very important questions. This also suggests that we have done some study > of what we "expect" those measure to do -- we have some history and we > understand what the underlying process is capable of doing, whether that is > a people process or a mechanical process. Frequently, it doesn't really > matter if the measure increases, decreases or stays the same. It is too > easy to over-react when the quarterly sales figures drop if one does not > understand the underlying behavior of the system. If the underlying process > is variable, then the measure will vary. Period.

Melissie:

In that case, why would you measure something presumed to be stable? is it because you need to make SURE that it stays stable? In that case, your action is to decide to take no action. That said, I do agree that you need to understand what the underlying process is capable of doing. The classic measurement process (I wish I had my notes for this, but I will do my best from memory) is:

1. Define the construct, the thing you want to measure.
2. Start the logical chain - what serves as a proxy for that? For example, I knew a maintenance group that had one measure for building maintenance that worked - computer up time. If the building did not provide what the computers needed, they had a problem.
3. Determine how you collect the measure.
4. Determine how you will analyze and report the measure.
5. Implement.
6. Monitor. Does the measure do what it is supposed to do

And all the while, keep in mind that measures are an invasive procedure. They do alter the system you're observing. by the way, Sue Hanley also has done some terrific work in the basics of measurement for the US Navy. It used to be on a Navy website.

> The other important question to ask is what do you want from the process? How > would you like it to behave? Does the measure help you see this behavior? > Are you asking the process to do something it cannot do (asking too much of > it, or asking for too little variability)? Actually I would phrase this as a > matter of validity - does the measure measure what it purports to measure? If > the measure asks something that is improbable, it is undoubtedly invalid. >> This leads the way to improvements. If the process is not behaving to your > standards, then something needs to be adjusted: either

the process or your > expectations. But you can only discover this if you understand both what > the process can deliver and what you (or your customers) need from it.

Melissie:

I'd also like to raise the issue of predictive measures (which I learned from Eastman Kodak aeons ago.) We also need measures that help us see what is coming down the road (this is in contrast to what Deming calls rear view mirror measures.) [I find rear view mirror measures \(stock performance, for one\) to be easier to develop. I find good predictive measures to be immensely valuable for learning and adjusting with less pain.](#) Does this resonate for you?

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 8:12 am

**Subject: BASICS: Organizational Systems Based on Measurement - Kurt Rieger**

**From: Kurt Rieger, ATP Management Design - Business Integration**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 265, Reply to message 2

Dear Melissa & Bill

I have very short on time at the moment but I do read what is being discussed. Melissa you are correct in your long term vision. My team and I have already developed "organisational systems" based measurement systems. It has been fully tested in the concept to commissioning phase of very large projects (A\$1200Million). In this phase knowledge and learning is at the highest rate and in this hi tech electronic world the lessons of past projects are hidden in huge amounts of paper that are stacked by organisational disciplines and most is kept by the supply chain that has a vested interest in maintaining knowledge gaps. The sad part is this leads to 80% of hi tech system failures in the operations phase for which the supply chain can not be held accountable. See my point . . . . [Knowledge building is one key objective of our system, the other key objective is to identify leaders within organizations that are willing to contribute to organisational leadership top down bottom up.](#)

Kind Regards Kurt Rieger

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 9:04 am

**Subject: BASICS: Show Effect on Corporate Pain - Jack Vinson**

**From: Jack Vinson**

Subject: RE: Putting Value of KM into Words, Measures - Bill Hall

Bill said:

>What we need is a language and means for people in the problems to >clearly explain and demonstrate to our executives the value of proposed >and current KM activities. Currently we often know we are right, but >many aspects of KM addressing corporate

imperatives are in the form of >intangibles that cannot be readily or directly translated into >shareholder added value.

What a position. And a position in which many more of us find ourselves than we like to admit.

I was at a conference last week where one of the topics was determining ROI for knowledge projects. I particularly enjoyed the comments of Kevin Cookman from The Chalfont Project, who said that we should remember the lessons of human psychology. The best behavior changes happen when the new behavior removes (or reduces) pain.

[In business, the best way to get funding is to show how a given project removes/reduces corporate pain.](#) Huh? Does your project help improve throughput of the company? Does it help increase sales? Does it reduce the \$\$ we spend on our suppliers? Does it reduce internal expenses

These may be difficult to quantify, but the better job we can do at making these connections, the more likely we will get the attention of the people who hold the pursestrings. Kevin Cookman suggested using "expected value of an action" analyses to help ballpark potential outcomes and their values. (This has many different names but they all combine probabilities, cost and potential value.)

Jack

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:06 am

**Subject:** [BASICS: Using Sveiby, Allee Models - Melissie Rumizen](#)

**From:** Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Re: Show Effect on Corporate Pain - Jack Vinson

Jack, [I use Karl Erik Sveiby's model to describe intangibles, doing so in the context of business investment.](#) This has worked extremely well for me in describing intangibles.

[I also greatly admire Verna Allee's work in mapping the flow of intangibles, an approach that brings the hidden into view, allows the identification of gaps, and show opportunities to increase value.](#)

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 6:53 am

**Subject:** [BASICS: Valuing KM - Jack Ring](#)

**From:** Jack Ring

Subject: Valuing KM - caution long post

About 15 years ago the design staff came to me with a request to upgrade to the new, faster version of the PCs we used as the platforms for our CAD application. They had been using drafting boards only a year earlier and had not become anywhere near proficient in CAD let alone the management of all the CAD files; so I decided to put them through a little, "what will this do for me?" exercise. Their sales point was that the new PCs were twice as fast (2X) as their current ones and they needed the faster machines because our competitors might be buying them. Also that professional associates and friends would be getting the 2X faster machines any time now.

I asked whether 2X PC's would enable them to accomplish their design projects in half the calendar time. Stunned, they mumbled, "NO."

I pointed out that the current PCs were in use less than half the time and asked if that meant the 2X PC's would be used only one fourth the time. They mumbled, "No," but could not give a reason.

I asked whether 2X PCs would result in a two fold reduction in design errors encountered by manufacturing or our customers. They mumbled, "Don't know."

I asked whether 2X PC's would result in a better return on the expense of having them as employees. Catching on, they said a better return could be expected but they did not know what the new Return on Resources would be.

I asked them to go calculate how much 10 percent of their time was worth and how much they would be willing to spend to get 10 percent more productivity. Challenged, they returned shortly with an answer.

I asked them to go calculate how much they would be willing to spend to get 10 percent more innovation such as 10 percent more performance from a product they were designing. Catching on, they returned with an answer. It did not look right to me, but the numeral was not important; the goal was the mental model they had formed of the connection between investment and innovation.

Frustrated, they then informed me at some length that it was the spirit of the thing that mattered. How could I expect them to be the best if I wasn't willing to give them the best tools for the job? (I knew I should never have hired anyone under 30 but there we were). Encouraging them to educate me we even created a mental model of the connection between enthusiasm and tenacity and the will to exceed.

Then I told them NO.

It didn't take the four of them more than a day to get to my boss with their complaint. He decided they should get the 2X machines to keep them happy. I acquiesced. They learned just how important tenacity can be.

We all got an inkling of how much more important enthusiasm is than ROI, time saved or money saved.

So what? Well, if your enterprise runs as an orchestra of projects and the measure of a project are cycle time, quality and Return on Resources (consumed or monopolized) then the marginal value of any intervention that changes any of the three can be calculated.

If the KM you want to insert into the milieu is a project with measurable intent and results then it is simply a 2X PC' The cost of inserting it is quantifiable, the effect it is expected to have on the project measures is quantifiable and the effect it is expected to have on enthusiasm is discussable.

But, you say, for KM projects that are not so directly connected to project measures the story is not so neat. What about designing an ontology? What about spending an hour understanding deBono's lateral thinking or Barrett's contrarian thinking. How do we predict the ROI of those?

[My answer is, Stop Predicting. Instead, estimate how much these things would have to change in order for the KM project to be retrospectively justifiable.](#) Then engage the troops in assessing the risk of making that amount of change come true. And if they say, "Nope," then move on to the next KM idea.

Make sense?

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 3:24 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Big Big Bucks Demand Hard Answers - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Valuing KM - Jack Ring

Jack,

Mostly, I agree. Chuck Seeley of Intel, however, makes the point that once you reach an investment of around \$1 million US, those making the investment rightly expect some figures. Accordingly, [I keep in mind that the larger the investment in both dollars and time \(time of the people involved and time to implement\) as well as the scope the more I need to demonstrate some quantifiable value.](#)

In short, there are a number of factors, which include the ones you mention.

I must admit, the potential of enthusiasm is one I've never made explicit. I like that word, as opposed to the standard user ability.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 12:49 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Learning from Failure? - Denham Grey**  
From: **Denham Grey**  
Subject: BASICS: Learning from Failure

Often the hardest knowledge practice to implement is learning from failures (our own and those of others). Even when we do AARs (After Action Reviews) or compile learning histories or conduct lessons learned (during and after). There are identity and cultural issues that prevent deep learning, e.g. shame, loss of face (and budget!), loss of trust, increased risk perceptions, loss of confidence, unsurfaced blame ....

Many times there is an unsaid feeling of "now if it were me, I would have seen it coming, taken preventative action, been more aware, fixed and corrected it sooner, or simply just not been so stupid!

I was wondering what Buckman does to leverage learning from failure?

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:42 am  
Subject: **BASICS: Talk Openly, No Blame, No Excuses - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Learning from Failure? - Denham Grey

Denham,

The simple answer is that we talk about it openly, no blame and no excuses. That to me is one of the beauties of the AAR, which, it should be noted, should be facilitated. The facilitator should help surface the undiscussables, make sure that no blame is assigned, and dig through to the deep issues. I refer you to Nancy Dixon's work on this, who states the issues very clearly in Common Knowledge  
<<http://www.kwork.org/Store/featured.html>>.

This was not always so with us. But we have taken to it like a duck to water. To my immense surprise and delight.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 7:13 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Communities of Practice Are About \*Practice\* - Archives**  
From: **Jerry Ash**

The juxtaposition of this dialogue on CoPs (and such) with my work on the book I'm now calling "CHAMPIONS of the New Order," causes me to slip into this conversation with some renewed memory about discussions we have had over the past three years comparing CoPs, teams, taskforces and workgroups.

The most extensive dialogue occurred back in mid-2002 when Hubert Saint-Onge, then a KM-champion senior VP at Clarica, focused on CoPs and was visited upon by former STAR Series Moderator Tom Stewart, then a member of Fortune magazine's editorial board and now editor of the Harvard Business Review. They were hotly exchanging views when Hubert's colleague, Deb Wallace stepped in with some moderating of her own!

Central to the disagreement was the purpose of communities. Hubert was the architect of communities at Clarica from the vantage point of his office in the executive suite. He saw CoPs as a replacement for training and development (T&D) which he felt was passe in a learning organization. To Hubert, CoPs could be organized by the hierarchy for specific purposes like learning. "Hubert is wrong, wrong, wrong," Tom said with certainty. Tom saw (I assume still sees) communities as self-forming groups, not formal and not responsible for actually doing work. Tom felt strongly that any attempt to create communities -- or interfere with those that naturally formed -- would undermine the purity (my word) of the environment.

That's when Deb Wallace stepped in:

--Excerpt--

DEB WALLACE: Being at the beginning of an emerging field of study is a fascinating time. People are jockeying for position in describing the terminology; outlining the basic concepts, showing the relationships between ideas; bringing some form and function to the fundamental principles, seeking some credibility; trying to understand the value, the needs gaps, the benefits. It stands to reason that there will be conflicting views as the language sorts itself out!

One thing I've found useful in working with groups that are exploring the possibilities of knowledge management strategies is to begin with vocabulary. If we can decide on what the terminology means (or at least put a stake in the sand and agree that this is a starting point), then we can move ahead with greater speed because we don't have to stop and describe what we're talking about all the time.

Lots of terms have been tossed into the conversation so far <- but maybe it makes sense to go back to the basics of what we mean by a community of practice. There are lots of different types of "communities" at work in an organization -< communities of interest, of learning, of purpose. You see lots of different types of communities described in case studies and conversations about knowledge initiatives. Each has a set of characteristics that distinguishes it from other types. Communities of Practice are a very special kind of community where the focus is on practice -< the ways and means of accomplishing a work function. At this type of community, the core is a collaborative effort to improve practice -< the way people do their work. Wenger et al. in *Cultivating Communities of Practice* define communities of practice as:

"Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their understanding and knowledge of this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."

At Clarica, I think we've taken the definition a step further and directly linked it to practice <- how we do our jobs. The focus of a community of practice, then is to collaborate on improving not only individual practice (e.g., how do I do my job better?) but to also raise the bar and set standards for how the practice is best performed <- to generalize the improved practice to a broader group (e.g. how do we as a group better our performance and contribute to reaching our firm's strategic imperatives?).

You might compare this two-level approach to the notion of individual and organizational capabilities. In a community of practice, I as an individual can improve my own capabilities, but in doing so, I also contribute to advancing the capabilities of the practice to which I belong <- collectively we improve on the fundamentals of how we achieve our goals.

[JERRY: Referring to self-forming groups, I had asked earlier if a clique were a community? I was (still am) concerned that self-forming communities of \*practice\* can be exclusionary, due to social, political or structural reasons.]

DEB: Is a clique a community of practice? I don't think so, but it does perhaps take on the characteristics of one of the types of communities -- people getting together to discuss something.

If a community of practice accepts some support from the firm <- even as little as the use of the corporate email system to communicate <- does that mean that it is no longer a "pure" community of practice? If you look at the type of communities that Jerry is talking about as "naturally forming around the water cooler," perhaps you have to beg the question <- who provided the water cooler? You can see some level of support of communities from the firm in most types of communities!

Larry Prusak participated in an executive development institute we did some years back. He suggested that the best thing an organization could do to promote a knowledge strategy was to give people some time, attention, and resources <- the beer and pizza solution. In supporting communities of practice with a method of communicating, a place to store their knowledge, tools for collaborating, or whatever, we're doing just that <- giving them the time, attention, and resources they need to further their individual and collective practices.

JERRY ASH: But ... Do Communities of Practice Do Work

I return to a fundamental question. You (and now, we) keep talking about giving CoPs chores to accomplish on behalf of the company; but, some say emphatically CoPs "Don't Do (assigned) Work!" They say teams and CoPs are totally different things. Please

respond to this conflicting view. It is not only troubling, but fundamental to our understanding of what we can expect from communities of practice.

DEB WALLACE: CoPs are where Work "Can" Happen.

Perhaps again we're tied up in the language, "chores to accomplish on behalf of the company" and "communities of practice don't do work" -< well what do we mean by chores and work? If you again go back to the core of a community of practice -< they come together because they do want to improve how they do their work. They want to know how to do their chores better! They want to improve their individual capabilities and advance their practice -< otherwise, they wouldn't participate. So I'd have to disagree that they don't "do work" -< they, in fact, accomplish a great deal of work! But that work is self-initiated and how they accomplish it is self-governed out of a need created from "within." If the firm and the people involved in a particular practice are aligned -< all focused on achieving the firm's strategic imperatives -< the "work" accomplished from "within" might indeed coincide with a need perceived from "without."

So, instead of a firm spending a pile of time and money to put a new sales training program in place, why not create a community of practice for the sales staff so that they can learn from each other? Has the firm given the community a mandate to create a training program or given them a chore to do? Or, has the firm provided an opportunity, an environment in which sales people can learn from each other? Seems to me this is a bit of a "half full" and "half empty" conversation.

-- End, Excerpt --

I still enjoy reading this! A community of practice is about \*practice.\* It's so ... well ... BASIC.

Jerry

P.S. If you want to read the entire Dialogue with Hubert Saint-Onge on "Conflicting Views on Training and CoPs," it is one of the last of the Dialogues synthesized in two parts for publication on the AOK Web site by Chris McGuire, administrative manager, the Reservoir Team Ltd., Adelaide, Australia:

[http://www.kwork.org/Stars/saint-onge\\_pt.1.html](http://www.kwork.org/Stars/saint-onge_pt.1.html)

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:44 am

Subject: **BASICS: How Adults Learn in CoPs - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: Communities of Practice Are About \*Practice\* - Archives

**Thanks, Jerry!** One of the highlights of this year was the opportunity to give a CoP workshop with Deb.

I would like to see the principles of adult learning applied to CoPs as well. Adults learn by doing. Adults learn from their peers. Adult learn when the content has meaning for them. Adults learn when the time is right for them.

I learned recently that at Buckman some people save messages threads on new content learned in our CoPs, for their future reference. I view that as a sign of good professional functioning within a community.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 9:13 am

**Subject: BASICS: Self-Organizing Within Context of the Organization - Jack Vinson**

**From: Jack Vinson**

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS: Teams, Workgroups & CoPs - David Jones

Jerry did an excellent job of reminding us of previous conversations on this topic. Here are some other things I've heard.

[At the Enterprise Learning and Knowledge Exchange in March 2002](#) Hubert Saint Onge described all groups as sitting on two continua: one being short term vs. long term and the other being structured vs. unstructured. All organizations have a variety of these groups, and the balance depends on the needs of the organizations. Given his STAR discussion and the nature of Clarica's distributed sales organization, I can understand why he argues so heavily for these groups to be knit into the hierarchy.

And just last week at the Chicagoland Learning Exchange (<http://chicagoland.executivelearningexchange.com/>), Leandro Herrero of The Chalfont Project talked about Teams vs. Communities as the difference between Design (team) and Emergence (communities) in organizations. He argued that the value of communities is that people come together "naturally" around a common interest, and that when organizations put structure around communities, they tend to lose the interesting properties of emerging groups. His argument was that organizations need both types of groups, but that most focus on the things they can "control" (design). He suggests that we need to create the capacity for people to self-organize, within the context of the organization.

Jack Vinson

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:25 am

**Subject: BASICS: More to Think About - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Self-Organizing Within Context of the Organization - Jack Vinson

Cooooooooo!!!!!!!. More to think about.

Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 7:23 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Difference in Data/Info Managment & KM - David Jones**

**From: David G. Jones**

Subject: Ontology Makes Cognition, Action Possible - Denham Grey

[Would you kindly describe for me the difference between data / information management and knowledge management - as you see it](#)

David.

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:42 am

**Subject: BASICS: Explicit Stored; Tacit Hard to Capture - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen" <mcrumizen@b...>**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Difference in Data/Info Managment & KM - David Jones

David,

Data/information management focuses on codified, explicit bits and bytes, that can be stored in the computer and -- for those of us with grey hair -- on such arachic devices as paper.

[Knowledge management looks at both tacit and explicit knowledge, depending upon what is needed.](#) Tacit is messy, hard to capture, and involves wetware. As such it can be more difficult.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 9:08 am

**Subject: BASICS: What Does Explicit Knowledge Look Like? - David Jones**

**From: David G. Jones**

Subject: Re: Explicit Stored; Tacit Hard to Capture - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie said:

> Data/information management focuses on codified, explicit bits and > bytes, that can be stored.... > > Knowledge management (focuses on tacit knowledge) which is messy, hard to capture, and involves wetware.

Thank you. I view data/information management as the management of information resources (i.e. products) in any medium, in accordance with a set of standards and approved practices. IM then is concerned with books, letters, reports, movies, CD's and sheet music. It is also concerned with mechanical / physical storage and transmission, definitions, use protocols, policies and laws.

With the exception of the phrase beginning with "definitions," these issues are of minor relevance to the management of personal and organizational knowledge. But to seek understanding - [perhaps you could give me an example or two of what "explicit knowledge" might look like.](#)

David

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:09 am

**Subject: BASICS: Hang the Textbook; Call an EMT! - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: What Does Explicit Knowledge Look Like? - David Jones

David,

I like your definition of information management better than my answer, but [I'm glad to define explicit.](#)

My favorite example is the process of CPR. In classes we teach people the explicit process. However, if my mother needed CPR I'd holler for the nearest EMT, who hopefully would have years of experience and a deep tacit knowledge that goes far beyond the sequence of steps and textbook descriptions.

Is this sufficient

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 8:19 am

**Subject: BASICS: Latent, Applied, Expert Knowledge - David Jones**

**From: David G. Jones"**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Hang the Textbook; Call an EMT! - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie wrote:

> My favorite example is the process of CPR. In classes we teach > people the explicit process. However, if my mother needed CPR > I'd holler for the nearest EMT, who hopefully would have years of > experience and a deep tacit knowledge that goes far beyond the > sequence of steps and textbook descriptions. > > Is this sufficient

Hmmm. Gonna try to work through this. I am fully CPR and heart de- fibr certified.....but do I have any "knowledge" around that? I don't think so. It's like I have enough information about diamond cutting to be able to cut a diamond - and ruin it; therefore no knowledge. I may have the firstaid manuals down pat - but couldn't handle a cut finger on a picnic.

Second, I tend to distinguish between specific, task oriented practices - that equate to something called "training" and "procedures;" and the latent knowledge of someone who is able to apply that to situations (which are always unique) as they occur.

That's why you prefer a professional EMT for your mom -- or even better yet having a renowned heart surgeon living next door -- than relying on someone who knows the mechanics, but has no accumulated experience and knowledge around the techniques of first aid.

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:23 am

**Subject: BASICS: Difference Between Novice and Expert - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Latent, Applied, Expert Knowledge - David Jones

David,

I'm a little wary of getting into any information vs. knowledge debate, as context makes all the difference. That said, I think what you are describing is a key difference between novices and experts (although some research describes that as a continuum usually having five levels from beginner to expert.) **In practice, I recognize the expert by their ability to operate in new situations and their knowledge of different contexts and situations.** I think of this as the "but if...." syndrome. For example, in first aid you are taught never to move someone. But if someone is bleeding from the mouth you must move them.

To use a different analogy, a novice chess player usually only can see a play or two out. They can still play (witness my sister) albeit at a different level of competence. In contrast, expert chess players have patterns of chess moves in their head. They can "see" much further out, what the outcomes of various options would be, than the novices.

Both "know" something about chess. But the quality of knowledge (and output) are different. The novice has explicit knowledge, but relatively little tacit. The expert has tacit knowledge galore, but may be unable to articulate the explicit. This is because the expert doesn't even know what they know anymore, as the knowledge becomes automatic, only to be called forth when needed. As a trainer I find this immensely frustrating, as there are relatively few experts who can verbalize their thinking processes. This week I went mushroom gathering with an expert. Once we found mushrooms, she was able to articulate what made them edible, a trip to Jamacia, or deadly. Then she invariably had

much to share, but before that her advice was to "avoid the brown ones." (Most of them looked brown to me.)

I also think that some situations occur repeatedly. For example, in bread making I know what happens when I add too much liquid, too much flour, dead yeast, cold water, too hot water, etc. I know those situations, what the reactions, and what, if anything, I can do. But I still encounter new ones, where I try to apply principles. That's my try!

Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 12:46 pm

**Subject:** BASICS: Compliments to Melissie and Gary Klein

**From:** Jack Ring

Subject: Re: Difference Between Novice and Expert - Melissie Rumizen

Great post, thanks. Complementary to Gary Klein's recipe for becoming intuitive in specific domains.

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Date: Sun Nov 2, 2003 6:16 pm

**Subject:** BASICS: But What if Expert is a Jerk? - Valdis Krebs

**From:** Valdis Krebs

Subject: Re: Difference Between Novice and Expert

Good description (by Melissie) on expert and novice! I especially like the chess analogy. Being both a chess player and KM person it fits well, IMHO.

[One point most people miss is whether the expert, and his/her expertise, is really accessible.](#) Maybe s/he has great knowledge, but is it really available to the rest of the org? When I was an employee @ TRW in the late 1980s we did a "knowledge map" [using SNA] of a 120 person lab. When we presented the results, the lab manager was surprised ... the key expert they had hired several years ago was not being utilized.

The expert was well known/respected throughout the defense community, TRW was very glad to have him. Yet his expertise appeared to not be utilized where it should be. The lab manager asked those in the meeting "What's going on?" There was silence... lots of staring at the ceiling, uneasy rustling. Finally a brave soul piped up -- "No one interacts with him because he is a jerk!" Soon all heads at the table were nodding in affirmation. Here was a person with loads of tacit and explicit knowledge, and was being paid for it, but not making it accessible to the rest of the organization. What to do? [not a simple answer]

On the same maps were a couple of other surprises ... a few folks, who were not viewed as "key experts" by management, showed up as key resources in several knowledge domains. These people did not have the greatest stores of explicit or tacit knowledge --

yet, they did have enough to understand the problems/opportunities the org faced -- they DID have an excellent problem solving manner! People would come to them to explore ideas/concepts/theories. These people were great, not at giving out packaged answers, but at helping others learn, ask better questions, and look at their problems in a new way. They were key catalysts!

So is it those who have knowledge, or those who help create it, that are more important? IMHO you need both, with the right connections among them.

Valdis

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 8:24 am

Subject: **BASICS: But What if Expert is a Jerk? - Valdis Krebs**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: But What if Expert is a Jerk? - Valdis Krebs

Valdis,

I agree - the expert needs to be willing to share and trustworthy. I'd also add another characteristic - have the ability to share. I remember in my first job as a (nominal) adult. We had an expert, who was approachable, trustworthy, good-natured, etc. But he didn't have a clue on how to share. Evening working with him, side by side, didn't work. When he left, he took everything with him. Sigh.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 2:47 am

Subject: **Expert is a Jerk = Perceived poor service quality - Greg Timbrell**

**From: Greg Timbrell**

Subject: Expert is a Jerk = Perceived poor service quality

This phenomenon is a very interesting one and something that I have been working on for several years.

**My premise is that knowledge sharing is a service and therefore has all the normal service quality attributes.**

The 'expert is a jerk' or the 'expert can't get his expertise across' are just two elements of service quality.

What about: the expert is good but incredibly unreliable so we never get the advice when we need it.

Or the expert is very slow (perhaps careful; perhaps busy; perhaps distracted) and the advice was needed yesterday.

There are several attributes that make up service quality and various schools of thought in this space eg. Nordic School and US School.

In advising on 'advisory services' that are knowledge-intensive I look to service quality attributes first. The process engineering approaches to knowledge flows and audits address only some of these issues. Culture / corporate sociology impact these outcomes as well. It has taken me years to figure out how this works and more recently I have been applying the same principles to "mine" for service innovations. (recently spoke on this at the actKM conference in Canberra).

So often, organisations are given a new structure and some stretch objectives to cut costs in their service offerings. "Mining" for service innovations provides a way to direct specific KM interventions towards core knowledge-intensive business outcomes. Once you have identified your business related knowledge outcome you are in a much better position to identify targeted KM interventions.

A word of warning however. While supported by company executives this approach can be threatening to anyone whose job title is "Strategic Planner" or similar in a knowledge-intensive firm.

Greg Timbrell QUT Australia

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 2:04 pm

**Subject: Toxic Encounters: When Experts Work for Jerks - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Expert is a Jerk = Perceived poor service quality - Greg Timbrell

For those who seek the goal of leveraging knowledge by applying a process of Knowledge Production and Utilization, Greg's ideas illuminate the Utilization side.

We see Utilization as Demand - Supply - Accept for which the service model serves well for the Supply part (and one facet of Demand wherein the expert perceives that the client needs to know and what the client needs to know). The other facet of Demand (wherein the Client realizes that the client needs to know and perhaps what is needed) and the Acceptance step is more concerned with the psychodynamics of the expert and client than with the content of the subject matter.

[Given that somewhere around one third of random encounters between humans result in a toxic inter-behavior it is no small wonder that many experts are seen in a negative light. Wonder what experts think of the clients?](#)

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 2:03 pm

**Subject:** BASICS: Fifth Quadrant; Super Expert - Jack Vinson

**From:** Jack Vinson

**Subject:** RE: Difference Between Novice and Expert - Me lissie Rumizen

[This comment \(about the expert chess player knowing chess so well they can't articulate it\) reminds me of a fifth quadrant of the Johari's window](#) that someone mentioned. The basics are

- I know what I know. (Conscious competence) - I know what I don't know. (Conscious incompetence) - I don't know what I know. (Unconscious competence) - I don't know what I don't know. (Unconscious incompetence)

The fifth "quadrant" takes a look at the super-expert type people and says that they "Know that they don't know what they know." (Conscious unconscious competence) Huh? They have trained themselves (mentally, physically, spiritually) to such a level that they are very good at what they do, but they cannot necessarily describe how they do it. The fact that they know this is important because they keep striving to improve and improve their skills.

Still not good? Athletes at the top of their game do not analyze what they know when they perform (Michael Jordan), but they know this and continue to train themselves to perform at that level.

If we add the Johari's window to the Novice - Expert continuum, the meaning of each of the windows would vary across that continuum.

Jack

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 8:26 am

**Subject:** BASICS: Think Outloud - Melissie Rumizen

**From:** Melissie Rumizen

**Subject:** Re: BASICS: Fifth Quadrant; Super Expert - Jack Vinson

Jack,

[One technique I have used for the silent expert is to ask them to think aloud as they do something. Getting them to start talking helps.](#) Then I look carefully for any gaps. I then ask, what happened there? Talk through that. It sounds as if there was a shortcut. Then I have someone do what they've described. Often you find other gaps that way.

Of course, having another expert gives us a different lens, and you can compare the two pictures you get.

After doing this for a while, experts can get better at voicing what they know they don't know. Like just about anything, practice can help someone improve.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:09 pm

Subject: FW: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS: Fifth Quadrant; Super Expert - Jack Vinson

From: Jack Ring

Subject: Re: Fifth Quadrant; Super Expert - Jack Vinson

This is an interesting prompt for a point about our language.

If tacit means inexpressible or inexplicable then one has to ask, "in which language." Beethoven, Mozart and others have clearly demonstrated that the language of music can communicate "stuff" that other languages cannot and can cause realizations to occur in people who cannot describe those realizations verbally. Art likewise. And the foundation of poetry. [The biggest gap we have is that none of the languages used by humans can deal with time. Only with the concept of intervals thereof.](#)

OBTW, Be careful with what and that. I know what I don't know differs considerably from I know that I don't know. Has to do with the notion of an empty set. That pesky concept of zero, again.

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 5:21 am

Subject: BASICS: Bill Hall Shares Years of Research on Explicit Knowledge

From: Bill Hall

Subject: RE: Explicit Stored; Tacit Hard to Capture - Melissie Rumizen and David Jones

[Reminder: Dr. William P. Hall is documentation systems analyst for Tenix Defence, Williamstown, Victoria, Australia. In addition, Bill is honorary research fellow, Knowledge Management Lab, School of Information Management & Systems, Monash University, Caulfield East, Victoria, Australia.]

David Jones asked,

["... perhaps you could give me an example or two of what "explicit knowledge" might look like."](#)

Although the question wasn't directed to me, I'll buy in here, given that this is an area I have been researching for several years from both the organizational and academic points of view.

Some definitions to establish a coherent framework for discussion, and especially those establishing the relationships between data, information and knowledge, are unavoidable.

The following is abstracted from a hyperbook I am writing on the history and evolution of knowledge management technologies (i.e., mostly to manage explicit knowledge). Information has two senses - the general and global term encompassing all content, and a specific one in the transformation or value hierarchy below. I also provide links to some concrete examples of the management of explicit knowledge in my own work in the defence industry.

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The framework is based on a structure I first encountered in the Australian Army Information Management Manual, authored by Ian Coombe around 1995 [<http://web.archive.org/web/20010302160925/http://www.eclectic.au.com/specly/im/iml.htm>]:

o DATA is the atomic level of information

Data is the atomic level of information, i.e., undifferentiated or disconnected text. Without structure or connections to other information, data or strings of text are essentially meaningless, either in logic or in a knowing subject.

o Context and syntax transform data/text into INFORMATION

When value (or meaning) is added to data by collecting, classifying and linking elements together into coherent tables or records, the links and surrounding elements of data provide a context that help humans or computers assign meaning to the data. Relational database applications provide technology to help collect, tabulate and link relatively low level kinds of data elements, and can automate processes to extract information into useful outputs.

o Semantics guides assimilation and transformation of information into KNOWLEDGE

Operationally defined, knowledge is appropriate information that is known and available to the user when and where it is needed for a purpose. Deeper concepts of knowledge and semantics depend crucially on their philosophical and psychological foundations, and consequently are contentious to define. What is considered to be knowledge and how it comes to exist falls within the philosophical domain of epistemology, as well as having objective foundations in biology, ethology and cognitive psychology. My concept of knowledge is developed in the framework of evolutionary epistemology "... A piece [i.e., element] of knowledge is an object which we can use to produce (generate) predictions or other pieces of knowledge.... True knowledge is an instrument of survival [i.e., 'true' knowledge provides a successful outcome when applied in nature]. Knowledge is power. There is no criterion of truth other than the prediction power it gives. Since powers, like multidimensional vectors, are hard to compare, there is no universal and absolute criterion of truth." (My italics - quoted from Turchin 1991 - <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/KNOW.html>).

New knowledge is built by assimilating and organising data and information and relating this to experiences with external reality and to prior knowledge. In linguistics, semantics refers to the relatively mechanical processes and rules by which a brain or computer infers meaning from the vocabulary and grammar (syntax) of natural language (whether spoken or written). In a metaphysical sense, semantics includes the rules and processes by which unevaluated information of any kind is given cognitive meaning. In an evolutionary epistemology, knowledge is built semantically by making inferences and evaluating them against prior knowledge and external observations. Bad inferences don't mesh well with what is already known and observed, and are quickly discarded, successful inferences count as knowledge until shown to be false through conflicts with observed reality.

o Awareness and assessment transform knowledge into INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is used here in the military sense, i.e., intelligence is the cognitive product resulting from actively collecting, processing, integrating, analysing, evaluating and interpreting elements of existing knowledge. This cognitive product is often presented in the form of informed predictions, or in scientific terms, hypotheses about the state or future of external reality. These products may also be explicitly expressed in writing. As such, intelligence represents a valuable extrapolation beyond untested elements of knowledge. Intelligence grows as more knowledge (i.e., prior connections with reality) is assimilated into the cognitive product.

o Decision and action transform intelligence into WISDOM

Coombe says that wisdom represents the "application of intelligence through decisions... Intelligence is of no practical use unless applied by making a decision for action". Possibly a better term for the idea of wisdom in military affairs or competitions between organizations would be "strategy".

o Influence transforms wisdom into POWER

The term power has many different meanings. Influence is the application of wisdom to achieve power. In competition, evolution or conflict, power is the ability of an entity (individual or organization) to affect or control unfolding events to its own ends. In the broad sense, this can be defined as "strategic power". Power in such circumstances is purely relative. One entity's abilities to control events are measured against another's abilities to see who wins the day.

Strategic power has three major sources developed through the epistemic transformation processes discussed above:

\* epistemic power - the wisdom to know how to apply power,

\* will power - the decision or will to apply power,

\* logistic power - available resources enabling the application of power.

Epistemic power is the sense used here.

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Within this framework, explicit knowledge is semantically structured information that has been expressed in forms that objectively persist externally to a knowing person. The philosopher Karl Popper has developed a rich epistemology around the concept of "objective" knowledge - see Popper, K.R. (1972b). *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. London, Oxford Univ. Press, 380 pp.

In a pragmatic sense, making genuine knowledge explicit is the role of technical writers (especially) and many other authors who attempt to distill knowledge into transmittable forms such as instruction and training manuals, books and the like. I would also argue that objects like enacted workflow systems also represent a form of explicit knowledge.

More detail on my thinking about managing explicit knowledge can be found in an in-depth presentation I gave recently in New Zealand to a meeting of the New Zealand Knowledge Management Network and GOVIS (government IS forum) - [http://www.nzkm.net/assets/NZKMNetGovis\(1\).pdf](http://www.nzkm.net/assets/NZKMNetGovis(1).pdf).

Some other examples of how these concepts are being implemented can also be found in other publications: <http://www.tenix.com/PDFLibrary/91.pdf>, <http://www.binarything.com/binarything/openpublish/OpenPublish2001a.pdf>; [http://www.vscl.org.au/Seminar%20Papers%20&%20Slides/LegalXML%20Seminar/AIJ A VSCLEtopic8.pdf](http://www.vscl.org.au/Seminar%20Papers%20&%20Slides/LegalXML%20Seminar/AIJ%20A%20VSCLEtopic8.pdf).

Hall, W.P. (2003). *Managing Maintenance Knowledge in the Context of Large Engineering Projects - Theory and Case Study*. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, Vol. 2, No. 2. A garbled version should be available free - <http://www.worldscinet.com/jikm/02/sample/S021964920300005X.html> [The corrected version reprinted in Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 1-17 is available for a charge - <http://www.worldscinet.com/jikm/02/0203/S0219649203000334.html>]

I would also argue that this note and the referenced objects are all good examples of explicit knowledge. My hyperbook will be an even better example, as the hyperlinking objectively expresses the extensive semantic web underlying my own objects of knowledge.

However, as you may gather from my previous question to Melissie, I am still having problems translating the concepts expressed here into terms our executives can understand in their management paradigms. However, I have had some recent progress in the form of in-principle agreement on a significant KM survey and requirements development project.

Bill Hall

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 11:58 am

Subject: **BASICS: Hitting the Hot Buttons - Melissie Rumizen (+Jerry Ash)**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: Bill Hall Shares Years of Research on Explicit Knowledge

I have been debating on whether or not to answer this, as it has hit a hot button of mine.

I think there is a danger in taking the military (despite the 22 years I personally spent in the Department of Defence in the intelligence field, both as a soldier and as a civilian) analogy too far. Our field has been trying to get away from the belief that knowledge is power for years. I am reminded of the quote that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

I would suggest that everyone remember the context of the military, which is different from the context in which most of us operate. I for one am not so much trying to gain power, as to gain the knowledge I need for action. Knowledge as power is contrary to the spirit of community, which is one we wish to foster. It is contrary to the spirit of synergy, the spirit that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And so on.

Knowledge as power recalls too vividly to me those I know that clutch their knowledge to their bosom, refusing to share. Argh! To quote Jerry, I get emotional about this.

By the by, Verna Allee gives a much better, more complex yet simpler (and original) version of the basic framework in her groundbreaker, *The Knowledge Revolution*. I recommend that as an alternative which I find infinitely useful.

Regards, Melissie

[+**Jerry Ash**: When we see something we disagree with, we *\*must\** respond. Otherwise, the thought lies there unchallenged ... and others may think it must be a matter of indisputable fact. When Bill sent us the analysis of his research, he *\*expected\** it to be challenged. It hasn't. So, until now, it appears to be indisputable. I thought there was lots of controversy in his conclusions, including the idea that there is a continuum of data-information-knowledge-wisdom.

I think Bill shared his thoughts as a test.

So, to the rest of you, are you also debating whether to respond, or does your silence mean you agree with Bill Hall's views? Melissie's official tenure as STAR Series moderator is complete, but the conversation ends when it ends. Has it

P.S. Melissie, I once got into big trouble during a presentation to a prospective client when I recalled the old military line "Mine is not to reason why, mine is to do or die." It

turned out to be politically incorrect in Washington D.C. A retired military man in the group had a fit -- ruined my metaphor and my rapport as well! And I almost didn't get the job! I eventually wished I had not gotten it because this guy was a significant roadblock to developing a knowledge-friendly community. I soon learned it was not just because I was "politically incorrect;" this guy's management style was quite hierarchical ... even tyrannical. He was aware others thought of him in that light and he was not at all fond of the idea of shared decision-making.

But, here's my point: I not only learned to be careful about hot buttons; I took another look at the old "military saying," and discovered I *\*was\** incorrect. KM, according to some limited research I did, is not a stranger to the reality of the modern military. The military way has apparently changed since I was a lad (The modern military operates at a much different intellectual level since the days of conscription) and it is amazing to me how much individual decision-making is required in the field. So what is it about the military we should not emulate? Why? Is there any military practice we should emulate

I know this comes at the very end of your turn in the STAR Seat. Don't feel compelled to go into detail or even answer it; these are just questions I could not help but ask because of my personal "near miss."]

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Date: Tue Nov 4, 2003 1:28 pm

Subject: Re: Jerry's Military Comments - Paul Cripwell

From: J. Paul Cripwell

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 270 - Jerry's Military comments

Further Jerry's comments about the military and KM, here is an interesting sidebar.

I was talking to senior officers at the Canadian Defence Department about KM in the military and how I thought (wrongly!) that there was little KM in such a hierarchial structure. In fact KM has been in place (stealth mode, as usual) for many, many years.

[The military has its own versions of CoPs, called the mess.](#) These were created specifically as a place where rank was ignored, and officers could talk amongst themselves as equals, share ideas, stories etc. There are messes for officers, sargents and men, and in recent times some military (I think British and Canadian) have created an open mess for all ranks. In these establishments rank means nothing and everyone has an equal say.

Sounds like a CoP to me!

Cheers Paul

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 2:52 am

Subject: FW: [AOK\_K-Net] Re: Jerry's Military Comments - Paul Cripwell

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Re: Jerry's Military Comments - Paul Cripwell

[Referring to the mess hall as CoP: In Silicon Valley its called the Friday beer bust.](#)

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 2:51 am

Subject: **BASICS Addendum: Greys = Black and White - Bill Hall**

**From: Bill Hall**

Subject: RE: BASICS: Hitting the Hot Buttons - Melissie Rumizen (+Jerry Ash)

To Melissie,

One of the problems in trying to briefly summarise complex ideas is that shades of grey tend to become black and white.

Here I am referring specifically to the idea that "knowledge is power". Yes, some of the ideas relating to the data / information / knowledge / intelligence / wisdom / power transformations have come from the area of military affairs concerned with controlling a battlefield - but the framework is genuinely generic in its applicability.

Here strategic "power" basically equates to freedom of action or the ability to control events (whatever events may be of importance to the interacting entity) rather than having them controlled by others. It is also necessary to clearly differentiate between freedom of action at an individual level, when one is competing with other individuals; versus an organization's freedom of action.

[At either level, the entity that better manages its knowledge, intelligence and wisdom will have the freedom of action \(i.e., "power"\) to determine the nature of the game - and all people and organizations interact at this kind of level.](#)

Even charities and government departments compete for funding and resources, and in the provision of services - where advantages will go to those who better maintain their freedoms of action, and I think that any KM strategy that does not focus on the organizational or individual imperatives of its possessor is doomed to fail.

Regards,

Bill Hall

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 2:01 pm

Subject: **BASICS Addendum: Freedom 'From' or 'To' - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS Addendum: Greys = Black and White - Bill Hall

Bill's views make sense to me. This is the old issue of the meaning of freedom, is it freedom from or freedom to. [Clearly, the better a person's knowledge production and utilization capability, the more 'freedom to' they have.](#)

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 8:59 am

Subject: **BASICS: Taxonomy vs. Ontology? - Jack Ring**

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS: Methods, Approaches; Not Strategy - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie,

Thanks for the response. I think Mr. Buckman's session clearly sent the 'its the business, stupid' message. I appreciate your focus on the basics. I simply wanted to emphasize that the initial basics are not the basics of KM but of innovation, productivity, and market standing thus liquidity. When people start looking at an enterprise through KM lenses they tend to see lots of KM but not much else. Then they fall into all sorts of traps that they needn't have suffered through. The more successful seem to approach with 'how do I add a KM instrument to this orchestra?' which means they learn about orchestra's first.

Are there some basics regarding KM per se? [How about commenting on the current fad of discovering the taxonomy underlying a business even though knowledge production and utilization is about clarifying the ontology of the business.](#) Is taxonomy the right direction or just another example of the human penchant for doing what we know how to do instead of what should be done

Cheers.

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:38 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Dear Santa - Taxonomy in My Stocking - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Taxonomy vs. Ontology? - Jack Ring

Jack,

I like the way you put that. Yes, indeed, new converts to KM often put the cart before the horse.

[Even if an organization is emphasizing tacit knowledge, there is still some explicit knowledge that needs to be organized so that people can find it.](#) I am not so concerned about how they do it, but that they do it! Search engines still are insufficient for plowing through an extensive database, IMHO. A reference system gives the often frustrated user a way to think methodically about what they're searching for, and also perhaps discover something important which they may not have thought of at all.

If I sound strident, it is perhaps because I periodically mention to our CIO that I would like a taxonomy (or some organizer) in my Christmas stocking - and have done so for years. It is one of our weaknesses at Buckman, and our database has grown to the point that it is unwieldy.

And if thinking through an ontology helps people to focus on the business, all the better.

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 6:13 pm

Subject: FW: **BASICS: A Kinder, Gentler Santa? - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Dear Santa - Taxonomy in My Stocking - Melissie Rumizen

P.S. Bob and I discussed this today with an outside party. It is an area on which we disagree. (By the way, one of the things I love about Buckman is that we can disagree with anyone, to include the CEO and Chairman of the Board. Of course, our view may not prevail :-))

I expect that once Bob has a chance to view this discussion, he will jump in with his reasons for the contrary, which I welcome. He has some good points for the opposite view.

Contrarily yours, Melissie

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Date: Sun Oct 26, 2003 8:40 am

Subject: **BASICS: Educating Santa/ Context to Ontology - Jack Ring**

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Dear Santa - Taxonomy in My Stocking - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie,

Warning: some part of the following may be true and applicable to you.

Don't let up on your CIO. But be aware that when a typical CIO hears taxonomy, he/she thinks "data models." So be sure to raise his or her level of consciousness a couple of hundred points before pressing them for presents.

One benefit of thinking through an ontology is to help people interchange knowhow either F2F or computer-facilitated.

A second benefit of thinking through an ontology is to help people focus on the business all the better, not only by interchanging knowledge as above but also by making better

choices, either by analytic decision or intuitive path generation. Mutual ontology building results in a much better mental model of the business and of the feasibility of implementing any candidate decision.

A third benefit of thinking through an ontology is to help people be higher order people. Just as learning their first "natural" language elevates a person somewhat above the animal state and the learning of the language of tonal relationships (music) likewise, also does learning the language of mathematics (arithmetic using simple rules then the big leap to algebra using rules of reasoning). Then the language of cooperation, then collaboration is beneficial. Then just think how much more joyful -- thus effective -- each Buckman employee would be if they learned the language of languaging. This is fundamental to Argyris' double loop learning and Schon's Educating the Reflective Practitioner (and co-educating as in communities of practice) and, I suspect, to Malcolm Knowles ideas as well.

In fact, mutual ontology-building creates the foundation for the next level of behavior above collaboration. Let's call it combustion (synergy doesn't do it justice). Combustion is evident in dyadic relationships but seems to disappear when workgroups of three or more are formed. If Buckman could enable combustion among all staff the levels of productivity and innovation would approach ten fold more than current.

A day or two ago you mentioned Bob Bauer's helpful description "knowledge is information in context that enables a person to take an action" and I wondered where Mr. Bauer might think context comes from. I doubt that the stork brings it. Rather, context is contracted or emergent. The construction process can be haphazard, resulting in lots of knowledge that a person cannot explicate (tacit?) or the construction process can be somewhat more purposeful.

[A great way to start building purposeful context, thus get on with building ontology, is Concept Mapping.](#) See "Learning, Creating, and Using Knowledge" by Joseph D. Novak, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998. Dr. Novak explains what concepts are, how concepts are discerned and the applications and effects of concepts (particularly in fostering knowledge claims). Having been proven in education for more than three decades it is beyond conjecture.

Jack

P.S. [A concept mapping tool, CMap, is free at <http://www.ihmc.us>](http://www.ihmc.us) --- so Merry Christmas.

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 4:45 am

Subject: **BASICS: Indeed. Forsooth. Ditto. Right On - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: Educating Santa/ Context to Ontology - Jack Ring

Jack.

I agreed so thoroughly with this that I had nothing to add. But it occurs to me now that I need to make that explicit.

Indeed. Forsooth.

And ditto the message from Patti.

To quote you in a later message, [Yea, verily. Right on. So be it, and rightly so.](#)

Melissie

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 12:54 pm

Subject: [BASICS: Ontology Makes Cognition, Action Possible - Denham Grey](#)

From: **Denham Grey**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Context to Ontology

Thanks to Jack for a very cogent summary of the benefits of developing an ontology and using concept mapping to do this.

I would add one more benefit that has huge implications in larger organizations and for agile networked groups - consistent navigation, indexing, classification and markup. As we start to move to agent technologies; require or expect more and more interaction, reasoning, and dare I say it, "intelligence" from our connected digital networks and selves, consistent well-specified communication becomes the key issue.

[An ontology helps the group and organization negotiate meaning, co-ordinate actions and perform in a comprehensible manner.](#) I believe it is true to say, that without some fairly well understood ontology, self-organization quickly regresses to chaos (if it ever emerges).

Developing a working ontology, is one of the most important knowledge practices, yet this activity is often regarded as fluff, a waste of time, as unnecessary 'overhead'. Without a basic ontology, it is not possible for a group to bootstrap themselves to the next level by making distinctions, crafting patterns or leveraging co-ordinated action.

An ontology makes distributed cognition and autonomous action possible, it helps embed knowledge in ritual and artifact.

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Date: Mon Oct 27, 2003 4:03 pm

Subject: [BASICS: Ontology Mavens a Picky Bunch - Jack Ring](#)

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Ontology Makes Cognition, Action Possible - Denham Grey

Yea, verily.

With somewhat red face I need to add that I have been taken to task by ontology mavens. According to them [ontology is a concept, not an interpretable structure, so I should have been saying "formal ontology" when referring to the artifact](#). I think that applies to Denham's use of the word as well. Picky bunch. But that is exactly the value of an ontology, especially a formal one.

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 6:55 am

**Subject:** [BASICS: Onotology, Taxonomy Not Synonymous - Dirk Scheuring](#)

**From:** Dirk Scheuring

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 264

Subject: Ontologies vs. taxonomies

Although the terms "ontology" and "taxonomy" are often - and have recently been in this discussion - used as if they were synonyms, they aren't, and it's probably worthwhile to distinguish them, so that Santa can put the right item into that stocking. There are two main differences:

- [1. Ontologies need to be formally correct to qualify as ontologies, whereas taxonomies need not.](#) For instance, in many taxonomies found on the web, such as Yahoo's, you'll find a class like "apparel", which sports subclasses like "women" and "men". For a human, it may be clear what that is supposed to mean, but a machine, doing it's mechanical thing, would wrongly infer from that information that "women" are a subclass of "apparel". Therefore, a real ontology would have the subclasses "women's apparel" and "men's apparel" for the class "apparel".
- [2. A taxonomy indicates only the class/subclass relationships between its concepts, whereas an ontology also defines the properties of each concept to describe a whole domain of knowledge.](#) So, whereas a taxonomy will, at best, tell you that the class "dress" is a subclass of "women's apparel", which in turn is a subclass of "apparel", an ontology will not only do that, but will also tell you about the various properties of "dress": a dress has a "colour", it has a "price" and a "size", it is made of a "material", etc. - and the concepts of "colour", "price", "size", "material", their superclasses/subclasses and all the property relationships are also defined in the ontology, until the whole knowledge domain is exhaustingly covered.

This indicates that the creation of an ontology is a more demanding piece of work than the creation of a taxonomy; the advantages of an ontology, though, are that the final product is machine-processable, and that you can derive many taxonomies, serving the needs of very different users, from one formally correct ontology.

Deborah L. McGuinness, Associate Director of the Knowledge Systems Laboratory at Stanford University, has written a good, non-technical introduction to ontologies, their purposes and applications, which is available here:

[http://www.ksl.stanford.edu/people/dlm/papers/ontologies-come-of-age-mit-pre-ss-\(with-citation\).doc](http://www.ksl.stanford.edu/people/dlm/papers/ontologies-come-of-age-mit-pre-ss-(with-citation).doc)

All the best,

Dirk

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 3:15 pm

**Subject: BASICS: 'Cross Dressing' Taxonomy/Ontology - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Ontology, Taxonomy Not Synonymous - Dirk Sheuring

Great clarification. [But what about 'cross dress' which must appear under each gender-indicator.](#) Now what?

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 5:31 am

**Subject: FW: BASICS: Traffic Guards at 'Crossings?' - Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: 'Cross Dressing' Taxonomy/Ontology - Jack Ring

[Actually, shouldn't it be under traffic, for the traffic guards, who stand at the crossings?](#)  
Couldn't resist the pun, Jerry. Edit away!

Melissie

[Jerry: Traffic "guards?" Now there's a command and control term! :-) Would it not be traffic facilitators? Guides? After all, police are now "public safety officials."]

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 1:46 pm

**Subject: BASICS: 'Crossings' Different in San Francisco, Keokuk, Iowa**

**From: Jack Ring" <jring@amug.org>**

Subject: Re: Traffic Guards at 'Crossings?' - Melissie Rumizen[+Jerry Ash]

Now you involve 'location' modifiers. The structure would be different in San Francisco than in Keokuk, Iowa.

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 1:49 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Ontology Construction Challenge - Dirk Scheuring**



Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 8:19 am

**Subject: BASICS: Are You Facing Gap or Wall? - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Help Me Sell Ontology to Buckman - Melissie Rumizen

Presuming that the essence of selling it is getting others at Buckman to want it, [what connection are they not making?](#) Are you facing a gap or a wall?

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:12 am

**Subject: BASICS: More Complex than 'Gap or Wall' - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Are You Facing Gap or Wall? - Jack Ring

Jack,

When we started we had relatively little in our database. Over the eleven plus years that database has grown. IMHO, it is unwieldy. I also feel that our thinking has solidified, and it is time to reaxmine our thinking. I would like to have that conversation , given our current context.

However, [there is more than enough for our IT department to do, many more requests than capabilities and a need to maintain standards for a global organization.](#) I think our CIO is terrific, and that he and his department support us well. However, I do maintain I have the right to raise issues. That is, to be a professional irritant :-). Part of that role is to question thinking that may have become assumptions. Given my faciltiator training, I like to test assumptions.

Our leadership, of course, has the mandate to make the decisions.

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 12:40 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Taxonomy Too Slow for Our Needs - Bob Buckman**

**From: Robert H. Buckman, Chairman, Buckman Laboratories, U.S.** Former STAR Series moderator <<http://www.kwork.org/Stars/buckman.html>> Re: BASICS: A Kinder, Gentler Santa? - Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Taxonomy

Melissie has finally hit on a subject that is dear to my heart. I guess I need to put my two cents into this part of the discussion. So, here goes.

Back in the 60's and early 70's, I did a lot of investigation into methods of cataloging our past knowledge developments that existed in our research notebooks. In addition, I was

interested in ways that we might catalog that knowledge going forward in time as it was generated.

What I quickly learned was that any method of applying taxonomy to knowledge at that time was based on the individual applying the rules to the knowledge. The results were not consistent over time or across multiple individuals. In addition, there was not agreement on what was important or not important and this opinion changed over time depending on who was looking at the knowledge and in what context it was looked at. As such, it slowly became obvious that what was needed was a searching approach that could do full text searching on the basis of how the inquiring questions changed over time. In other words, [the search process needed to be much more organic in nature than most taxonomy allow. And, we needed something that would allow us to have this knowledge available almost as soon as it appeared. Applying taxonomy was too slow a process to meet our needs.](#)

That is the reason that I have always felt it was better to do full text searching than to do it based on some taxonomy. So we solved the problem by using a very large search engine to do full text searching of our knowledge bases. Now, when I say that, I also understand Melissie's frustration as the knowledge base has grown, the searching process is taking longer.

But, I think there might be hope on this point. Recently, I came in contact with Dr. Clara Yu of Middlebury College and Executive Director of NITLE (National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education) <<http://www.nitle.org/>>. They have developed a prototype of the NITLE Semantic Engine (NSE). This prototype was designed to address the universal problem of accessing and organizing large amounts of unstructured digital text. Using mathematical algorithms to index the latent semantic content of documents, the prototype engine has been demonstrated to drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the need for expensive and time-consuming metadata tagging, and to produce results superior to keyword searches in limited test domains.

Therefore, [I think there might be help for our search problem by tying in with NITLE and using their Semantic Engine.](#)

Any thoughts?

All the best. BOB

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Date: Tue Oct 28, 2003 12:45 pm

**Subject:** BASICS: Warning - Technology Advocacy - Jack Vinson

**From:** Jack Vinson

Subject: Dear Santa - Taxonomy in My Stocking - Melissie Rumizen

Melissie:

>Even if an organization is emphasizing tacit knowledge, there is >still some explicit knowledge that needs to be organized so that >people can find it. I am not so concerned about how they do it, but >that they do it! Search engines still are insufficient for plowing >through an extensive database, IMHO.

Warning: technology advocacy

In the last year or so, a number of vendors have started touting their advanced searching tools that go beyond word, boolean and nearness searches. They are adding "semantic" search to the collection of tools, so that a search for "tiger" will at the least categorize the results into information about the animal, the golfer, your new product of that name, the baseball team, etc. They are also enabling [concept searching](#), so that the search looks for related terms even if they don't appear directly in the media being searched.

The concept searching goes down another path to automatic summarization of large content, intelligently giving the viewer an idea of what is in the content. And a related direction here is the ability to find content that is related to the current content via the same summarizing mechanisms: imagine reading an article online and asking your computer for in-house content that is related to the article.

Most of these vendors also tie this information to users, making it easier to find experts associated with a given search.

Jack

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:10 am

**Subject:** BASICS: Extending the Santa List - Melissie Rumizen

**From:** Melissie Rumizen

Subject: Re: Warning - Technology Advocacy - Jack Vinson

Jack,

Thanks for sharing that with us. I now have something else to ask Santa for!

Cheers from a rainy Nachotta, Washington,

Melissie

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:00 am

**Subject:** BASICS: Free Text Search Limited - Jack Ring

**From:** Jack Ring

Subject: Latent Semantic Indexign too opaque for your needs

Bob,

Back in the 60's and early 70's the fledgling Information Systems Operation at General Electric designed the document storage, search and retrieval system for the Armed Services Technical Information Agency (ASTIA, later renamed the Defense Documentation Center, DDC), then the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLARS) for the National Library of Medicine, then the National Criminal Justice Reference System and even the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol Literature and Information. All of these were 'moonlighting' projects from our 'day jobs' building systems for the intelligence community.

It was clear at that time that taxonomies or thesauri were inadequate. For instance the list of candidate terms for the NCJRS exceeded 250,000 but only 50 could be used to surrogate the content of a document. You don't have to be a Claude Shannon to compute the Type 1 and Type 2 errors associated with  $\log(50)/\log(250000)$ . Furthermore there was about 20% drift per year in the content and structure of the list (lawyers never agree on anything). The statistics at that time showed a response to a typical query would contain X items. 7/8ths of the items would be irrelevant to your needs. The hidden problem was that the 1/8th remaining represented only 1/4th of the repository contents that was really pertinent to your needs. Thus you were getting only a partial story and wading through a lot of rubbish to get even that.

GE patented a Rapid Search Machine which was amenable to real time full text search. It had tristate logic (yes, no, don't care) thus could handle not only suffixes and prefixes but also infixes. It could count, also, so could deal with queries of the kind "find everywhere Khrushchev mentioned SS9's within 50 words of Cairo"

Sorry you could not have one back then because they were classified. In 1976 when we reduced the machine to a printed circuit board it could input 10 megabits per second and run time was constant regardless of the number of hits. The integrated circuit version today runs much faster, of course.

Much to the dismay of ARPA at the time we proved that preprocessing text for tagging for later retrieval took about three times more computer cycles than real time search. Being good bureaucrats they refused to listen.

Despite all this I suggest that free text search may not be a complete answer. We encountered the semantic gap between what people call things and what they mean by those labels. That can be attacked with Latent Semantic Indexing, at least for one person at a time. But the real problem is getting N people into the same mental model without stunting their innovation.

Ontology helps overcome the Shannon Limit of taxonomies, especially if full text search can be done. Ontology also helps overcome the Pierce limit of semantic ambiguity. Once the people understand one another better the level of language rises in the tribe such that much less has to be said to communicate a concept thus there is a saving of effort

(minor), an avoidance of error (significant) and a logarithmic rise in the level of consciousness of the organization (stunning).

A way to get above the IT level of consciousness is Joe Novak's book, Learning, Creating, and Using Knowledge. Unfortunately he didn't ask me or it would have been Learning, Using and Creating Knowledge thus an acronym more applicable to KM.

FWIW I am not familiar with the NITL work. I understand SAIC also has a LSI engine but I have not seen it. Jan Hauser, Sun Technical Fellow and USN Postgraduate School prof. is well versed in LSI, to coin a pun.

But I suggest that the primary need is "interpersonal coherence generator" rather than analyzer machines. Look at Joe Novak's concept mapping and I'll bet you grok immediately.

Anyway, thanks for an interesting post.

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:02 am

**Subject: BASICS: How About Free Image Search? - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring" <jring@a...>**

Subject: Re: Taxonomy Too Slow for Our Needs - Bob Buckman

Bob,

While we are at it, [what is your position on free image search](#)

Although most enterprises have 80 percent of their information (and knowledge) in media other than text we all seem mesmerized with the text processing problem.

You may want to contact Prof. Forouzon Golshani, ASU, who has arrived at an ontology that unifies the representation of things in text, images, graphics, CAD files, .ppt files, video and even audio.

We are getting closer to actually managing knowledge even though Drucker said it couldn't be done.

cheers,

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 3:13 pm

**Subject: BASICS: This Product Abhors Taxonomies - Judith Meskill**

**From: Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Taxonomy Too Slow for Our Needs - Bob Buckman

Hi Bob,

'ThinkTank23' has a product called 'NAV4' that is the basis for a weblog 'related post' plugin called 'Waypath' that both Jack Vinson and I are utilizing on our weblogs. Simply put, Waypath analyzes weblog entries to discover their essential makeup and then compares this essence to its universe of posts.

As Jack Vinson mentioned there's a growing number of engines that perform in this area. NAV4 came to mind for me as something that might be of interest to you because it abhors taxonomies, just as natural languages abhor absolute synonyms, and nature abhors a vacuum... (^:

[An article on ThinkTank23's position on taxonomies:](#)

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2002/8/prweb43527.htm>

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 5:33 am

**Subject: BASICS: Does Tool Find Like-minded People? - Melissie Rumizen**

**From: Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASICS: This Product Abhors Taxonomies - Judith Meskill

Thanks, Judith!

And a question for you - [do you use this tool to find people with similar interests? Could it be used in support of a community of practice?](#) We were talking at the conference (now over) about setting up screens for posts from people you particularly value. It seems to me that this tool could help you find new people to value and watch.

Questingly, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 8:24 am

**Subject: BASICS: Jack Vinson Likes "Ego Search" Feed**

**From: Jack Vinson**

Subject: RE: Does Tool Find Like-minded People? - Melissie Rumizen

To Melissie and all,

Do these things help me find like-minded people

Waypath <<http://www.waypath.com>> and similar tools enable a new capability for me (and I assume for the others who are using it as Judith described). As I review my website, either to find references I made myself or to bask in the glory of my writing (joke!), I find these Waypath references to add a new dimension to what I wrote. When I

have the time, I can browse the related links and frequently learn something new -- and new people with similar interests. When I don't have the time, it doesn't particularly get in the way.

I have actually found more value in a slightly different feature of Waypath (and Feedster): [the Ego Search feed. I have set up an agent to search each of these for websites that "look like mine" and I browse these on a frequent basis.](#) I end up finding people who are writing about similar topics to me -- and I find people who seem to have absolutely no relation to me... I also have a feed set up for "knowledge management" that point me to people who mention that phrase on their weblogs.

I could imagine this kind of technology being helpful in a large organization, regardless of their using weblogs. The semantic search vendors I mentioned in the "technology advocacy" post have the capability to find users who have submitted materials that are related to your search. One could imagine adding a different twist on this: Given the material I've added to the system in the last week, who else is doing related work (that I don't already know)? Similarly, given the searches I've done in the last week... Fun.

Jack

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 2:53 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Waypath Does Find Like-Minded - Judith Meskill**

From: **Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Does Tool Find Like-minded People? - Melissie Rumizen

Hi Melissie...

The Waypath plugin, which is an implementation of the NAV4 engine at the weblog post level, is both simple and sophisticated if one utilizes the 13 arguments of the associated XML-RPC API. Phew, to move away from 'geek-speak' and answer your question in a straightforward manner- in my opinion, yes. (^:

[I have 'tweaked' my implementation of this tool as I utilize it on my weblog and as a result have found a number of folks, outside the range of my current group, who are 'talking' in channels that I discuss on my weblog.](#) (social - software, networking, networking analysis, weblogs, blogging, and knowledge - society, economy, work, workers, sharing, and management)

My weblog is a personal 'news' aggregation tool that I use for my research:

<http://www.meskill.net/weblogs/>

There is a strong 'Knowledge' centric CoP operating in the 'Blogosphere' and a number of its members are active in this 'Star Series' discussion group.

Dave Pollard, CKO of Ernst & Young published a discussion paper on his weblog yesterday that you might find interesting (in MS Word format):

<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/images/TheFutureofKnowledgeManagement.doc>

I am also writing a discussion paper on 'Personal Knowledge Mapping'.

Cheers... Judith

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 2:59 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Start with Enterprise Ontology - Bob Bater**

**From: Bob Bater, principal associate, InfoPlex Associates, Bristol, UK**

Subject:

Subject: Ontologies vs. taxonomies

As a lurker on, and very occasional contributor to this group, I was very interested to read Dirk Scheuring's excellent account of the difference between ontologies and taxonomies. We are, of course, indebted to the Knowledge Engineering community for the concept of ontology which some KM practitioners are adopting. My own use of these concepts would appear to be a cut-down version of Dirk's, and perhaps illustrate Melissie's comment that very often these concepts form a continuum, rather than being entirely distinct.

When building corporate taxonomies, I start with what I call an "enterprise ontology" which expresses the basic concepts comprising an organization and the relationships among them. It is the concepts themselves and their relationships which are important at this stage, not the labels I use to identify and differentiate them. Just occasionally, a concept will have a set of attributes, as Dirk says.

This enterprise ontology then serves as the framework for determining the various controlled vocabularies which K-workers will need to use to discover knowledge and information. These controlled vocabularies can then be mapped onto the ontology to create a taxonomic framework of authorized terms for use in resource discovery. A final, optional stage, adds to the taxonomic framework all the terms from local 'dialects' or specialist domains (sometimes other languages too, here in Europe), synonyms, broader/narrower and related terms to create a corporate thesaurus.

I was also fascinated to read that something, somewhere "abhors taxonomies," but was not surprised to find it is a corporate search application vendor. However, I was impressed by their strap-lines, which I cannot argue with:

"Search engines find only words; Categorization engines find only what they already know; Nav4 finds ideas."

This reminded me that I have long been on the lookout for some kind of objective review of the comparative effectiveness of these different approaches to knowledge retrieval. My suspicion is that they all have their own virtues in different resource discovery scenarios, but has anyone come across an analysis of when conventional free-text search engines are best, when pattern-matching/semantic/probabilistic engines are best, and when taxonomies/metadata are best

Regards,

Bob

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Date: Thu Oct 23, 2003 7:56 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Decision Games -- Maish Nichani**  
From: **Maish Nichani**  
Subject: BASICS: Decision Games -- Maish Nichani

Hi Melissie,

You bring an "ease of understanding" to KM (taking one from IBM's "ease of use" campaign). Thank you for it.

Getting down to basics, I see a continuum of "experience" associated with KM. Those with a broad experience base are considered experts and those with a narrow experience base are considered novices. KM's goal is to bridge this divide by enabling a "legitimate peripheral participation" platform. But the question remains, Is the experience base spreading? Or put in another way, How can we speed up experiences

AAR is a wonderful way to use the KM platform to debrief "past events" and set up an agenda for learning from them. [Gary Klein \(Intuition at Work\) suggests the use of "Decision Games" to build an experience base for "future events"](#). He also suggests the use of "pre-mortem" analysis to study the effects of "failures" and then learn from them.

What's your take on these strategies? Did you use similar strategies at Buckman

best regards, Maish Nichani

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Date: Fri Oct 24, 2003 5:31 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: Tell Us More About Decision Games - Melissie Rumizen**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen** <mcrumizen@b...>  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Decision Games -- Maish Nichani

Dear Maish,

Thank you. I think all of us, expert(?) or novice, often are limited by our organizational experience. Very few KM people have the chance to move between organizations, as CKOs and the like tend to come from within. And although working as a consultant gives one a broader range, it is still usually as not as in-depth.

Decision games also are new to me. (This is great. I am getting more than I give in this exchange!) Are decision games similar to scenario planning? Are they case based? Or are they similar to a hobby of my former husband, war/combat simulations

At Buckman we are predominantly a sales representative culture. overall, we tend to be focused on the here and now. But we are changing, due in part to the influence of our current CEO, Steve Buckman.

And we have, at times, thought long, hard and seriously about our overall strategy, changing from innovation to customer intimacy in the 90's.

But this gives me some thoughts about what to suggest that we do in the future.

And [how can I introduce decision games?](#) Regards, Melisie

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 7:04 am

Subject: **BASICS: Decision Games Similar to Scenario Planning - Maish Nichani**

From: **Maish Nichani**

Subject: Re: Tell Us More About Decision Games - Melissie Rumizen

Hi Melissie,

Sorry for the late response, suffering from too many interruptions :(

Decision games are similar to scenario planning in that they both cater to future events. Gary Klein describes it as "[simple thought exercises, usually involving paper-and-pencil scenarios, that capture the essence of typical, difficult decision](#)".

Decision games are used for practicing decision-making in infrequent experience episodes. For example, firefighting, combat, merger, or outsourcing situations are complex and infrequent experiences, so how does one practice making decisions in such situations? Using decision games one can paint such situations in all their complexity and understand the real decision requirements.

I like this technique as it is realistic, simple, focused, and ends with a call for action.

Gary's book, *Intuition at Work*, describes how to create and implement decision games in detail.

I'm really enjoying and learning from all the conversations here. Thank you once again.

best maish

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Date: Wed Oct 29, 2003 3:28 pm  
**Subject:** BASICS: Short Takes - Melissie Rumizen  
**From:** Melissie Rumizen  
Subject: To Maish & Dirk

Thanks Maish! I shall get a copy for our learning center and see how we can incorporate it in our work.

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Dirk, Thank you for identifying the proper chimneys! It's now up to me to get the cookies and milk.

Regards, Melissie

Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Thu Oct 30, 2003 6:20 pm  
**Subject:** BASICS: The Party's Over; Almost - Jerry Ash  
**From:** Jerry Ash

Hi Everyone.

My duty on the second Thursday is to remind you that our STAR Series moderator -- in this case Melissie Rumizen -- is committed only through tomorrow (Friday). If you want to post a message and be sure to receive a reply from Melissie, do it now!

However, Melissie is now an AOK member and she's not anxious to exit the discussion. So, she'll hang with us a little longer.

Meanwhile, you have started a couple of dynamic new threads that reach beyond the basics I was shooting for and I strongly encourage you to keep going on them as long as it has value. Our next organized dialogue does not begin until November 17. In the interim, it's "open mike."

Thanks.

Jerry

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:42 am  
**Subject: BASICS: Real KM - David Jones [+Jerry]**  
**From: David Jones**  
Subject: Real KM

David Jones:

You can find a good deal of it on Dave Pollard's blog.....  
<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/>

**Jerry:** I held the above message from David because I couldn't figure out the context:

Hi David.

Perhaps I'm getting tired tonight, but I can't make the connection with context re. your reference to Dave Pollard's blog.

Jerry

**David Jones:**

**WE have a mutual problem. I can't see what all the discussions around ontology and taxonomy have to do with KM either.**

But maybe it would help if I explained that blogging - as a hot vehicle for creating, distributing and reacting to ideas - in an inter-dependent global community - is seen by many as THE vehicle for facilitating and accommodating personal and institutional knowledge. Pollard is a Canadian prophet of this belief.

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 1:11 pm  
**Subject: BASICS: Structure, Tools & EK Phobia- Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]**  
**From: Melissie Rumizen"**  
Subject: Re: BASICS: Real KM - David Jones [+Jerry]

David Jones wrote:

> WE have a mutual problem. I can't see what all the discussions > around ontology and taxonomy have to do with KM either. > But maybe it would help if I explained that blogging - as a hot vehicle > for creating, distributing and reacting to ideas - in an inter-dependent > global community - is seen by many as THE vehicle for facilitating and > accommodating personal and institutional knowledge. Pollard is a Canadian prophet of this belief.

Thanks for the background on Pollard.

For me, it is a process concern. If you have stored tacit knowledge/information/data you need a way to retrieve it. Given current search technology (although getting better) ontologies and taxonomies offer a way to structure and organize the material so that it is easier to both store and retrieve. I guess you could call it a mechanical problem, in one sense. From my user perspective it reminds me of the need to store goods in an organized fashion in a warehouse and be able to pluck the ones needed.

For me, it also relates to ease of use. As Jeff Stemke of Chevron tells me, users have different ways they prefer to search. Some like having a structure; some like a search tool. I happen to like both.

Regards, Melissie

[**Jerry:** As a KM professional, I am coming to realize I have developed an explicit knowledge (EK) phobia. It's natural enough. After years of fighting against the hijacking of KM by IT, and reciting the mantra "most knowledge is tacit knowledge (TK)," I have developed a hole in my thinking -- a big one if you believe that 20-30 percent of all knowledge is explicit. "Stored tacit knowledge," as Melissie puts it, is explicit knowledge, is it not? It has become a document, disembodied from the originator. But what is the shelf life of "stored tacit knowledge?" It seems to me this kind of "document management" could spoil quickly outside the host unless it has been treated with some heavy preservatives. See. There I go with my EK paranoia again! It's an attitude.

Well, while I'm showing my colors, there's this other thing that bugs me -- "capturing" knowledge. It seems to me that if KM involves "capturing" knowledge from its holders (individuals) to enrich the company's intellectual property, then the knowledge-hoarding, "them and us" syndrome continues. So, I have this attitude toward explicit knowledge that I need to break if I am to be a complete KM professional. Shared knowledge does not have to be fleeting to be acceptable. But, as I move down this road, I will be vigilant of the pitfalls. KM (even EKM) is not IM warmed over.]

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 1:59 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Thanks for Pollard's Ideas - Jack Ring**

From: **Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Real KM - David Jones [+Jerry]

David,

Thanks for adding Dave Pollard's ideas about blog benefits to our ontology of KM.

The clarity of data, information, knowledge, wisdom, etc. is still somewhat lacking but may improve.

Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:10 pm

Subject: **FW: BASICS: Thanks for Pollard's Ideas - Jack Ring**

**From: Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: Thanks for Pollard's Ideas - Jack Ring

You are most welcome jack... (^:

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:07 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Don't Confuse Bits & Bytes with Knowledge - Jack Ring**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Re: Structure, Tools & EK Phobia- Melissie Rumizen [+JerryAsh]

My view is a variant of Melissie's (avoiding some terms) and hopefully a great comfort to Jerry.

Knowledge is stored not on disk drives but in brains. In fact it is not stored as is. The arguments for regenerating it are stored thus the neat saying, "knowledge is what I know when I need it." Rather like not storing the output of a CAD file but storing the inputs and running the program again at some other site.

So how do you retrieve knowledge from that kind of storage device? Just ask it, you say. Not that easy.

First there must be some degree of commonality in the languages used by your brain and the other brain. The commonality of terms (operands) does not have to be as high as does the commonality of operators between the two. This was illustrated by the paragraph that came by last week from the researchers in the UK illustrating that the operands could be greatly garbled but still comprehended by most readers (did anyone compute the change in entropy from a perfect original to that garbled version)? Arriving at such commonality can be done by mutual exercises of ontology building. I submit that the Studio session described by Donald Schon in "Education the Reflective Practitioner" is an act of building an ontology. And if the ontology recognizes visceral, emotional and spiritual aspects for each concept the recall will be greatly faster with higher fidelity.

Second, the storage device must know how to access the regenerator at will. As explained in Gary Klein's "Intuition At Work" we all know a lot of things that we don't know we know. However these things can be accessed by our brain even when we cannot figure out how to invoke them. This is the situation that killed most expert systems because the act of wresting such tacit knowledge out into the light of explicit knowledge cost \$632 per 'rule' and just wasn't worth the cost.

So what you ask and how you ask it has a lot to do with just how tacit (inexpressible, inexplicable) that knowledge remains.

Capturing knowledge is another point of potential relaxation, Jerry. Consider that knowledge isn't necessarily captured from some body. Perhaps it is just floating around and you happen to catch it just like you catch colds. There has to be something like that going on or we would not see hundreds of instances in which fundamental new inventions were made by three people within a time window of weeks when the three were completely unaware of one another.

[Sooooo, relax, don't confuse Pierceian signs \(bits and bytes\) with the concepts they signify \(knowledge\). And always allow for emergent phenomenon.](#) Where was the rain 'stored' before the cold front occluded with the warm front? And where was that vibration stored in that violin string before the other violin began to play? Knowledge captured had to be free immediately prior. Otherwise it is common knowledge which is the half life stage of knowledge as it decays into data.

Feel better now

cheers,

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Date: Fri Oct 31, 2003 8:58 pm

**Subject:** BASIC: Knowledge in Captivity is History -- Jerry Ash

**From:** Jerry Ash Re: Don't Confuse Bits, Bytes with Knowledge

Thanks for convincing me that one more sole thinks the way I think. Actually, even a lot of documentarians and techies think the way we think. But I won't feel better until the human perspective of KM dominates.

Nevertheless, I still need to get comfortable with the "hard stuff." I seem to feel better about "capturing" when it is a byproduct of sharing, not the purpose of it. When knowledge sharing is practiced electronically -- such as in the STAR Series -- "knowledge" is automatically "captured," and it remains there for as long as the archives are available. The issue is this: Did I set up a discussion group in order to "capture" your knowledge? Or did I do it to help the participants exchange knowledge, views, experiences, questions, learnings, teachings in a collaborative environment

There is no doubt that my mind has absorbed, synthesized and adapted (not necessarily adopted) everything I've learned from the hundreds of you who have shared what you know. It is the basis for what I know; but what I know is decidedly different -- the sum total of all I've "captured," but stored "my way." And, my way changes -- sometimes slightly, sometimes dramatically -- every time a new twist enters the (this is Halloween night) caldron.

Codification is another thing. The AOK archives codify -- they "capture" the raw material and that's it. The AOK archives are a record of the momentary knowledge of other people at a given point in time -- kind of like a snapshot or a survey, a freeze frame of what someone wrote or thought in the context of the moment. Are these artifacts valuable?

You bet they are! They are valuable thought-starters that come to life the moment they are plugged in to any human brain. They have the same effect when they are activated (read) later as they had when they were first read, except that time marches on and the value/validity of those artifacts change.

And so, capturing knowledge has only marginal value. But the power -- and I am emotional about this -- is in the flow of knowledge, not the knowledge itself. You cannot capture the flow and you cannot effectively control it. In a knowledge-driven organization, knowledge flows freely -- following no process, system, structure or technological chain. It is like static electricity. The role of process, system, structure and technology is to provide channels where the flow can become less chaotic and lead to collaborative benefit now. This is why we have come to the conclusion that Communities of Practice (CoPs) are the bedrock of knowledge enterprise. Process, systems, structures and technologies may well assist them. But, it is the organic culture of the CoP that turns knowledge into value in the now. Yes, "capture" the historic work of the CoP -- but don't think for one minute that the archives are a repository of the knowledge. Archives are history!

Jerry

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Date: Sun Nov 2, 2003 6:24 pm

Subject: BASICS: Memorabilia Trigger Thoughts About Past, Future - Jack Ring

From: Jack Ring

Subject: Re: Knowledge in Captivity is History -- Jerry Ash

Quoting a friend, "Memorabilia serve to trigger thoughts about the past and, often, about the future.

The AOK archive is memorabilia, not knowledge.

Some knowledge has been encoded in memorabilia.

And much that has, triggers knowledge generation that produces false knowing, quite different than what was encoded.

But be careful of the palliative CoP. Jim Jones had a great one in Guyana -- for a while.

The atomic level is the dyad -- two people interacting. From this you can cluster all sorts of different molecules that hang together due to a) coherent channels plus b) the value to them of what is transpiring in those channels. Metcalf's law applies (the fellow with the first fax machine couldn't use it very much) and the value of being in a cluster increases exponentially with the number of salient interactions. Then critical mass occurs wherein two or more people move from collaboration to combustion (the fusion of visceral, mental and spiritual knowing, individually, and co-learning, communally) thus elevate to the realm of 'increasing returns'

It isn't that knowledge flows freely, because if it did it would be everywhere thus no need to flow anywhere. Its in the pathing, the generation of relationships, that enables knowledge to flow. People generate relationships, machines only use connections."

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 8:32 am

Subject: **BASICS: Support Group for Tacit K-Heads - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: BASIC: Knowledge in Captivity is History -- Jerry Ash

Jerry,

I agree with you. I have often thought that if just one more person tells me that databases and data warehouses are KM I shall run amok and be featured on the evening news. Or (to go back a few years) that getting Lotus Notes means that you have KM. Or that portals are KM. And so on.

Then I take a deep breath. I think of myself as a cook who uses the recipes of others, as a reader who learns from what others have written, and as a viewer who learns (and enjoys) what others have filmed/videoed - I see the value of explicit knowledge.

As a trainer, I cherish those who try to make their tacit knowledge explicit and those who have the skills produce it, both as live training, although I still believe that our CoPs are our best source of knowledge and training.

I then think of organizations such as FedEx that rely on a great deal of explicit knowledge. Every night in Memphis we have our own version of the Berlin airlift, starting around midnight. This is why Memphis airport is the largest cargo carrying airport in the world. Organizationally, what I then do (after the deep breath and unclenching of fists) is to to ask what type of knowledge best serves the organizational strategy. And THEN I point out that you need a combination of both, no matter whether you focus on explicit or tacit.

I think we need a support group for those of us who have parried the outrageous arrows of tacit knowledge for too long!

Regards, Melissie

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 8:28 am

Subject: **Social Capital - Collapse of American Community - Jack Ring [+Jerry Ash]**

From: **Jack Ring** To: Jerry Ash

Jerry,

If this has relevance to AoK feel free to post. "[Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community](#)" by Robert D. Putnam may provide some useful trend data for those interested in modeling Social Capital.

[Jerry - Thanks Jack. We've added it to the AOK Bookstore <<http://www.kwork.org/Store/general.html>> and below are a couple of interesting reviews.]

#### Editorial Reviews

Amazon.com Few people outside certain scholarly circles had heard the name Robert D. Putnam before 1995. But then this self-described "obscure academic" hit a nerve with a journal article called "Bowling Alone." Suddenly he found himself invited to Camp David, his picture in People magazine, and his thesis at the center of a raging debate. In a nutshell, he argued that civil society was breaking down as Americans became more disconnected from their families, neighbors, communities, and the republic itself. The organizations that gave life to democracy were fraying. Bowling became his driving metaphor. Years ago, he wrote, thousands of people belonged to bowling leagues. Today, however, they're more likely to bowl alone:

Television, two-career families, suburban sprawl, generational changes in values--these and other changes in American society have meant that fewer and fewer of us find that the League of Women Voters, or the United Way, or the Shriners, or the monthly bridge club, or even a Sunday picnic with friends fits the way we have come to live. Our growing social-capital deficit threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness. The conclusions reached in the book *Bowling Alone* rest on a mountain of data gathered by Putnam and a team of researchers since his original essay appeared. Its breadth of information is astounding--yes, he really has statistics showing people are less likely to take Sunday picnics nowadays. Dozens of charts and graphs track everything from trends in PTA participation to the number of times Americans say they give "the finger" to other drivers each year. If nothing else, *Bowling Alone* is a fascinating collection of factoids. Yet it does seem to provide an explanation for why "we tell pollsters that we wish we lived in a more civil, more trustworthy, more collectively caring community." What's more, writes Putnam, "Americans are right that the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has very real costs." Putnam takes a stab at suggesting how things might change, but the book's real strength is in its diagnosis rather than its proposed solutions. *Bowling Alone* won't make Putnam any less controversial, but it may come to be known as a path-breaking work of scholarship, one whose influence has a long reach into the 21st century. --John J. Miller --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly

"If you don't go to somebody's funeral, they won't come to yours," Yogi Berra once said, neatly articulating the value of social networks. In this alarming and important study,

Putnam, a professor of sociology at Harvard, charts the grievous deterioration over the past two generations of the organized ways in which people relate to one another and partake in civil life in the U.S.

Jerry Ash

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 3:29 am

**Subject: Re: Bowling Alone - Social Capital - Valdis Krebs**

**From: Valdis Krebs**

Subject: Re: Bowling Alone - Social Capital

Also this... an excellent, more business-oriented book on social capital... "[Acheiving Success Through Social Capital](#)" by Wayne Baker  
<http://www.kwork.org/Store/comm.html>

Valdis

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 12:03 pm

**Subject: FW: Weblogs, Unanswered Posts, and Other Epiphenomena - Judith Meskill**

**From: Judith Meskill**

Subject: weblogs, unanswered posts, and other epiphenomena...

Dear Melissie,

You have spoiled us with your lightning fast responses to our every query. Somehow my last post went unanswered!

In it I answered your query on Waypath, recommended that you read my "virtual friend" Dave Pollard's weblog and his treatise on the future of Knowledge Management, and related that there is a strong, functional Knowledge CoP alive and well on the web today - in the form of weblogs.

If you go to my website and view the list of "k-loggers" in the right hand column you will see a list of those that I track:

<http://www.meskill.net/weblogs/>

Many AOK'ers on this list. I was wondering if you have considered starting a weblog? You would be a wonderful addition to this online Weblog Knowledge CoP!

The paper I am currently writing on "Personal Knowledge Mapping" discusses the usability of weblogs, in a corporate setting, as a vehicle for the dissemination of "personal expertise" sans face to face accessibility to an expert.

We all know that we cannot "harvest" the knowledge of our experts (hat tip to Denham Grey's weblog), we also know that all knowledge cannot be "captured" in Knowledge Bases, and alas we know that technology based Knowledge Management solutions are not the answer.

Inspired by the likes of Valdis Krebs and his [Social Networking Analysis, Research, and Solutions](#), I believe that successfully connecting the "knowledge nodes" in an organization through customised mapping of an organization's knowledge workers is key. I love working at this intersection of Knowledge Work & Workers, Social Networking and Weblogs.

Best Regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 1:02 pm

Subject: [Question for Jack Ring re Weblogs as Simulated World](#)

From: **Judith Meskill**

Subject: a question for Jack Ring re weblogs as simulated world...

Jack,

To quote you (from "Learning by Doing: Getting Faster Every Lap"):

"Doing is what causes all types of learning to occur. Other ingredients of learning are purpose, nourishment, tenacity, and time. But without the doing part, as is well known, retention suffers and the ability to apply what was learned degrades quickly. And the vetting of doing helps ensure that what is applied makes sense.

A good alternative to practicing doing in the real world is to practice doing in a simulated world, especially for the second and third types of learning. An effective learning culture arranges for the joy of achievement while immersing participants in realistic environments that protect them against undue penalty for error (no sense discovering gravity by being the apple)."

[Would you possibly see topically purposed weblog communities as a form of 'practice'?](#)  
And by extension a 'simulated world' in which one can share learning while avoiding the serious consequences of gravity

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Tue Nov 4, 2003 1:25 pm

Subject: [Weblogs as Simulated World - Jack Ring](#)

From: **Jack Ring** <[jring@amug.org](mailto:jring@amug.org)>

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Weblogs as Simulated World

Judith,

Your excellent question has numerous facets, it seems to me. However, I am not qualified to respond to most of them.

By simulation I meant the kind of stuff we do for business games including psychodramas where some of the 'manager trainees' are really professional actors inserted into the workgroup with pre-specified roles to play.

I have a hard time envisioning what is being simulated in topically purposed weblog sessions. One thought is that such weblogs simulate human interaction but with very low fidelity with regard to the trio of Joe Novak's essential ingredients of meaningful learning --- visceral, mental and spiritual involvement.

I see topically purposed weblogs as potentially a great medium for dialogue (in the Socratic sense as contrasted to the Bohm and Yankelovich sense) wherein one could 'share' learning and discover one's own unconscious biases. In that scenario weblogs can be valuable and participants are relatively free to make discursive mistakes with impunity.

Am I missing your intent?

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 7:07 pm

Subject: **BASICS: Why Take Time to Blog? - Melissie Rumizen**

From: **Melissie Rumizen**

Subject: Re: Weblogs, Unanswered Posts, and Other Epiphenomena - Judith Meskill

I didn't see how I could add any value to your response, so I was quiet. But I am reading - and thinking.... I also saw on CNN Technology today that something like 25% of people who start a blog next have more than one post. I am curious, having only read a few. [What motivates you and those we know \(I know some of the names on your list\) to share in this fashion? What is the return on your investment? Why do you make the time to do it](#)

Melissie

P.S. the credit for the seemingly lightning fast responses goes to Jerry. I've been coping with several difficulties, including having my computer locked into a hotel safe that broke - and had to be broken up by two strong men -- sweating and swearing --, with the use of screwdrivers and crowbars. My computer is not well.

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 2:41 am

Subject: **BLOGS: Re. Weblogs as Simulated World - Judith Meskill**

**From: Judith Meskill**

**Subject: Re: Weblogs as Simulated World - Jack Ring**

Jack Ring,

(and Melissie, as I feel this post answers at least a part of your "Why blog" question),

After reading your article, that I cited in my last post, it occurred to me that a type of simulated knowledge expert learning experience could be constructed via weblogs. And so I was 'thinking aloud' when I made this inquiry of you. I mentioned that these weblogs best be topically purposed, to reflect a certain discipline among the 'knowledge' and 'publishers' involved.

I have been in many large corporate settings in which knowledge creation, sharing, dissemination, and growth has been woefully substandard due to the desire of the knowledge workers involved to display their 'knowledge' as their own and their extreme resistance to being 'harvested' and 'dumped' into a vast corpus of enterprise knowledge.

[Weblogs offer a unique advantage of continually attaching a 'personality' to the expertise referenced within each weblog, thereby maintaining the signature of the represented 'expert'.](#) In addition, monologue - with comments and trackbacks - can become dialogue, can become discussion group.

A weblogger such as Dave Pollard, in my opinion, scores high on Joe Novak's essential ingredients of meaningful learning --- visceral, mental and spiritual involvement --- all within his weblog.

In my adventures in the blogosphere I have found an abundance of freely created, shared, and disseminated knowledge among experts who take great pride in their 'intellectual' pursuits. Weblogs succeed abundantly in areas where 'knowledge' is actively and purposefully being shared and developed. Once established a knowledge workers' weblog archives can be easily searched, on a number of different levels, and accessed as a discreet subset of the owners 'expertise'. And with 'faceted classification' schemes the universe of the individual webloggers 'knowledge' becomes infinitely more accessible.

Your article struck a chord with me Jack. I believe that so much of what a knowledge worker contributes to an organization, they often deliver 'virtually'. Since a weblog is an excellent 'virtual vehicle', I felt that 'simulations' could be constructed utilizing this environment - well within the parameters of a 'business game' - as a learning experience.

Thanks for thinking with me Jack! I am going down this road as a part of a paper I am writing on "Personal Knowledge Mapping" and I appreciate your feedback.

ps to Melissie on weblogging ROI:

I have experienced a substantial ROI Melissie for the time and energy put into my blogging. I have expanded my community of reference - similar in many ways to the excellent sharing that goes on here at AOK. Meeting the likes of Dave Pollard, Jim McGee, Lilia Efimova, Dina Mehta, and Roland Tanglao has also made it well worth the energy. One of the more interesting aspects of this weblogging experience is that it has helped organize my personal research in ways that make my 'notes' far more accessible to both me and my weblog cohorts. Webloggers here at AOK - like Patti Anklam, Denham Grey and Jack Vinson - are some of my favorite reads!

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 12:36 pm

Subject: **BLOGS: New Cracks in the Pavement - David Hawthorne**

From: **David Hawthorne**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 271

Life is opportunistic; humans are opportunists and "blogs" are new cracks in the pavement.

An Italian colleague explains to me that the idea of "Northern Italian Cuisine" is ludicrous! In fact, he says, there is no "Northern Italian Cuisine," just a few thousand or so local or regional foods and dining rituals which are confined to areas as small as a village, or perhaps, encompassing several villages, or a river valley, or a stretch of coastline. The concept of "Northern Italian Cuisine" is a creature of the marketplace...a result of the need to aggregate producers, distribution, and consumers in large enough concentrations to make an efficient market. (Why doesn't anything taste like the "real thing" when we encounter it away from its point of origin? Because its distinctive ingredients, methods of preparation, and surrounding rituals have been stripped away in the channel.) What does this have to do with blogs

Well, "blogs" are highly idiosyncratic attractors. They make visible extremely complex structures of human experience that resonate only with others who are reciprocally "wired." Note that the response set is not a "copy" of the "stimulus" set. There is no guarantee that any two people responding to a "blog" are actually having the same experience or getting the same information. Much of blog meaning is not explicit but tacit. It is not what is said, but how it is said. (And here's where taxonomies and even syntactical search engines fall apart) Meaning is fluid, conditional, and emergent. It continues to change even after it is spoken or written. No one comes to blogs equally. Blogs signal complex psycho-social dispositions that resonate only with some people who are already pre-disposed to respond (while everyone else is left unmoved). Blogs are just the latest technological means for social signaling ... letting like minded people find each other for the purpose of engagement. So what good are blogs in business

Well, my friend and I got talking about how "foodie" tourist sometimes fall in love with the local foods they encounter in Italy, and how many of them fantasize about opening a

restaurant or specialty shop back home; one that would not just be "Italian," but "authentically Italian." The logistical problems of realizing this fantasy are discouraging at best, but nonetheless hundreds of Italophiles return to Italian cooking schools, study at Italian universities, join Italian trade, cultural and fraternal associations and make every effort to realize the dream (a few, actually make it by establishing a personal supply chain that may stretch from their Italian Cuchina store on the village green back to a few crafts people, and producer cooperatives in some small Italian region... held together by internet links and air-express.)

Says, my friend, what sets these highly idiosyncratic retailers apart is that they tend to preserve as much of the cultural envelope as possible, especially the knowledge that makes the products distinctive, i.e. knowledge about preparation methods, ritual, presentation, accompaniment, even the plates, pots, and linens. They actually share this knowledge with their customers about grazing habits of the animals and the microclimates and ecosystems of the towns, villages, and food cooperatives they deal with... and they are bloggers (or just plain social mavens) aggressively seeking out every opportunity to be in contact with other people who share their love of this type of experience.

(My friend thinks that the growing use of the internet to assemble complex and unique networks begins to make this type of "business" viable for more people. He's had some success representing small producers of "uniquely distinctive quality products" to "clusters" of small US-based retailers and I think he's right. If he is, I will bet that we will find "blogs" right in the thick of this kind of value creation. I don't believe the "blogs" will themselves be valuable "knowledge databases" which can be searched productively for "knowledge artifacts" about Italian food and culture. If, however, you are looking to analyze psycho-social behavior, you might find what you want. Much of the "recounted factual" information will probably be wrong, but it will have served its purpose of signifying community based on "commonly perceived" identifiers.

-David Hawthorne

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 1:31 pm

**Subject:** BLOGS: Online Citations; Viral Plagiarism - Judith Meskill

**From:** Judith Meskill

**Subject:** Re: BLOGS: New Cracks in the Pavement - David Hawthorne

David,

"step on a crack and you break your mother's back step on a line and you break your mother's spine..."

Comes to mind for me when speaking of blogs as "cracks in the pavement"... I cannot help this remembrance as it hearkens me back to my early Brooklyn girl roots.

To quote you:

"For a wonderful tour of "citations" and "idea mongering, borrowing, and sometimes, stealing, see "On the Shoulders of Giants, A Shandean Postscript" by Robert K. Merton. It recounts the efforts of Prof. Merton to track down the origins of what he calls, "Newton's Aphorism," abbreviated to OTSOG. It's brilliant, funny, and humbling. It suggests that the store of human knowledge owes more to "plagiarism" than to the "printing press." The second item is "better to give than to receive" where knowledge sharing is concerned. The thing I have always loved most about knowledge sharing is that no matter how much you "give" the giver's knowledge is never diminished and is always increased. If only money were like that."

I would tend more towards an analogy of blogs as 'online citations', 'viral plagiarism', 'knowledge giving' that does not diminish with the giving.

All this talk about northern italian cuisine has made me quite hungry however. Another throwback to my early city roots where good italian food was, well, good... (^:

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 11:59 am

Subject: **BLOGS: On the Sidewalks of NY - David Hawthorne**

**From: David Hawthorne**

Subject: Re: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 272

On the sidewalks of New York

Judith,

I am astonished and deeply honored that you thought enough of the OTSOG item to keep it, and that you used it so well. Please drop by for a visit in my neighborhood (renovated to be NoLita/NoHo and the Lower East Side of New York) and I will treat you to some living evidence of what I mean.

Back when Italian restaurants in Brooklyn and Manhattan (and most everywhere else, for that matter) were really good was in the age of Italian immigration and those "personal supply chains" still existed because the owners and operators were still dealing more or less directly with the same providers from back home. Just as important, their self-awareness was actively and deeply connected to the home culture, and it was a lived experience rather than a fading memory.

In the past decade, there's been "new growth" sprouting up on the newly fashionable, gentrified sidewalks of New York. What often characterizes the most exciting new shops and restaurants is evidence of a new species of "culturally referenced" experiences that have an integrity all their own. These are often small, owner-operated businesses

bootstrapped by passionate young owners (and some equally passionate, but not so young owners). These people are deeply wired to the sources of the experiences they present. They travel to the places of origin and have personal relationships with the providers. They are extremely knowledgeable about what makes the design, or craft, or character of their product distinctive. (It has been fashionable to dismiss them as "dilettantes" or "yuppies" for the past generation or so, but I must admit, they have earned our respect.) The storefronts are brilliantly festooned with objects that were loved at conception and, lovingly transported to New York, and exhibited in exquisitely creative and evocative environments. These are largely self-organized enterprises from start to finish. And most significant, I think, the glorious sense of it comes not from "nostalgia" but from "discovery." They're expensive, but they're worth it. It's happening all over the country. People are being wildly creative in creating new businesses and new experiences without reference to "the way it has always been done." People are thinking through "what if" scenarios and coming up with the most preposterous solutions to making a living -and it works. [The more difficult challenge seems to be the renovation of conventional businesses and processes rather than the creation of wholly new ones.](#) I confess that I'm beginning to think that organizations can and do become diseased in time and renewal becomes increasingly difficult. Eventually you just have to smash up the pavement.

I believe modern knowledge technologies have made this new growth possible -but human nature makes it likely. I've lived here for more than 30-years now. I arrived in time to see the last vestiges of the beatnik era fade, welcomed the hippies, tolerated the taggers, dodged the boarders, was horrified by the hijackers, and still marvel that every time the pavement cracks something new, and sometimes wonderful, sprouts up. So, come on home, Judith. I don't think we can recreate your girlhood Brooklyn but I do think we can get you one of the best meals you've ever had.

-David Hawthorne

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Date: Fri Nov 7, 2003 1:41 pm

**Subject:** BLOGS: Re. On the Sidewalks of NY - Judith Meskill

**From:** Judith Meskill

**Subject:** Re: BLOGS: On the Sidewalks of NY - David Hawthorne

David,

We played hopscotch and double dutch and hula hoops on those sidewalks in New York. When San Francisco opened their brand new MOMA the first featured artist was a photographer and amazingly there were life sized photos of me and my friends in the opening exhibit... [imagine my shock, surprise, and awe] (^:

My father was a chef, and so food was always a big thing around our house and there were always groups of 10 to 20 sitting down to our table when I was a tot. My father's recipes were coveted - explicit - but they never tasted the same to the folks who tried to

replicate his creations because they lacked that certain - tacit - quality that only he could bring to a meal.

This dinner of knowledge that we prepare for our business and academic cohorts is also an 'alchemical' meal. [The explicit components might make the meal look easy to prepare but it is all of those tacit ingredients that truly make it a 'magical' feast.](#)

I would love to join you for a retro repaste in my hometown and study those cracks heaved up in the pavement. Thank you for the grace of the invitation... (^:

Best regards, Judith

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 12:59 pm

**Subject: CoPs: Watch out for Gated Community- Shealagh Pope**

**From: Shealagh Pope, Science Policy Analyst, Environment Canada**

Subject: Re: Community is Fundamental - but watch out for gated community- Shealagh Pope

David Hawthorne makes the very valid point that networking, especially as enabled by new communications technologies, is alive and well and allows us to pick the communities to which we belong and with which we identify.

[The danger is that communities of interest are so productive, valuable, comfortable, and engaging, that we neglect the communities of place to which we also belong.](#)

Communities of place - where we live (from the block through the country to the globe), where we work (again with the possibility of a number of scales) - often differ from communities of interest (whether face-to-face or virtual) in two important factors.

Firstly, they typically include a wider diversity of interests and perspectives than a community of interest. Even though, if we can, we usually choose the places we live and work to align with our interests. Inevitably, at least one of your neighbours is going to have a different political stripe than you. You may not choose to join an on-line community that focuses on the political right of the spectrum, being more left-leaning, but you might be forced to address that political-right perspective in an over-the-fence conversation with your neighbour.

Secondly, they usually require a consideration of a context beyond the issue of interest - and therefore can result in higher level of integration and recognition of the trade-offs, compromises, and, optimally, the creative solutions and synergies that allow us to meet more than one person's or one community's needs - not at the expense of another person or community.

Communities of interest can allow us to become comfortable in our views - enjoying the intellectual debate around a particular issue, but not being challenged as much as we

might be if we were to discuss the issue with people for whom it's not a particular interest or priority. Communities of place can help us by challenging us.

I think we need both, and I think the jury is still out on whether the explosion in communities of interest as supported by the internet will have a positive feedback affect on communities of place. Certainly, there are on-line components to communities of place that can be extremely valuable. But it is so easy on the net to simply splinter off and form a like-minded group whenever the debate gets uncomfortable. Using the net for the kind of critical, deliberative dialogue that we need to make sure the neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and countries we live in are safe, healthy, and productive is still in its infancy. I look forward to continued exploration of the possibilities of the medium.

Cheers,

Shealagh Pope Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 12:59 pm

**Subject: CoPs: Gated Communities; Finally Someone Wonders Who Gets In!**

**From: Jerry Ash**

Subject: Re. Watch out for Gated Community- Shealagh Pope

Wow, Shealagh!

You have been a member/lurker for one full year and here you are showing us extreme value of thought for the first time.

You use the words "community of interest," which gets my attention because I have long felt communities of practice (CoPs) are too narrow, smelling of the silo mentality we KMers want to tear down. Then you show me that my beloved "communities of interest" (COIs) either have broader social issues or your COIs are my CoPs and your communities of "place" are my CoIs. Confused yet

Let me explain why I like(d) my idea of CoIs.

CoPs, by definition, are gatherings of people of like or similar field, focus, profession, work, mind who collaborate. Whether self-forming or children of the hierarchy, they have unstated criteria for membership that probably assure a certain homogeneity. CoP to applicant: "What knowledge do you have that would add value to the group?" CoPs are, after all, about "practice." So, CoP to applicant: "What is your practice? And, how does it fit into our circle? Why should we listen to you?"

Those are examples of your wonderful metaphor of "gated communities!" [I wonder just how many communities of all descriptions are actually gated -- intentionally or not.](#)

My view of COIs has been as networks of people who simply have an interest in the focus of the community -- no special credentials, just interest. Never mind I'm not in R&D, I am in sales or communications or distribution or building maintenance and I have something to say about products and services. Or I'm the consumer or even the competitor. I know it ain't my job, but \*I want in!\* The CoP is probably gated, but the COI which may be focused on business strategy is open to the worker in the mail room and his/her .02 worth is welcome.

So, my CoI would be more like your "communities of place" -- real or virtual. And CoPs -- in my view -- fit the description you give COIs.

I don't mean to debate the semantics! What your post awakens (at least in me) is the issue of "community membership." As long as I have been engaged in discussions about CoPs, I have never observed any discussion about selection or recognition of community members -- in theory or practice.

Thanks for being the first!

Jerry

P.S. This may become a great prelude to the STAR Series Dialogues with Simon Lelic, managing editor, Knowledge Management Magazine, which begin November 17. I've asked Simon to begin the two weeks discussing lessons learned from his case studies on Communities of Practice.

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 1:07 pm

Subject: **BASICS, BLOGS & CoPs: \*Applause for Melissie;\* More Thoughts - Daniel Jonas**

**From: Daniel Jonas, consultant, Angelic Services Ltd, London, UK**

Subject: \*Applause for Melissie\* and some other thoughts on community

Insofar as I've been able to follow this discussion (which has been somewhat esoteric) it has been very interesting. I do like the idea of correspondence between an élite (being an elitist, heh heh heh). And as an ex-Lotus Notes consultant, I heartily concur with the notion that KM gets hijacked by IT. I have learned a lot about KM from building groupware, but too much attention gets paid to the digital deliverable and not enough to the human process. So nothing new there, then.

I have heard it said by my own KM mentor that blogs are going to be "the next big oversold massive waste of time". [I think it's going to be far more of a question of overload - blogs are going to have to stand on their merits just like everything else; the fact that they are blogs does not add much to the knowledge aspect - at least not without some good archive-search functionality.](#)

On the question of the change in society affecting communities, this has affected different communities in different ways. The Jewish community (at least its more traditional bits) owes its preservation of F2F value and informal networking to the community centre and synagogue as 'third spaces' - more specifically because of the Sabbath prohibition on driving cars; this means people continue to end up living within walking distance of each other, which helps with community cohesion. Similarly, other things which have, from a certain PoV, isolated us from certain societal trends have assisted us in preserving a distinct group identity. The net result of this is that I think we're rather good at, er... social capitalism.

So, I'd have to disagree with David when he says "Community is fundamental, how it is defined and how it is expressed is not" - because that hasn't been my experience. I'm not being prescriptive (or chauvinist, G!D forbid) of course, I'm saying that certain things which might be thought restrictive can in fact be beneficial. Nor am I advocating an anti-technological approach to CoP; I just think that constraints on the use of technology can be particularly effective in promoting non-technological inventiveness and creativity.

Daniel

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 1:12 pm

Subject: **BASICS'n'BLOGS: Applause for Melissie; Blogs & Politics**

From: **Connie Jackson,**

Subject: Applause for Melissie

Much applause from me to Melissie. This has been an amazing exchange of ideas, from the practical to the esoteric. The humor was wonderful.

Re blogs: [My take on blogs is that they are great vehicles for drawing like minded, but geographically separated, folks into a discussion.](#) Email is different because there is a new entry with each message. Blogs however are a string which can be followed and you determine when you want to participate without adding to email entries. In addition to those mentioned here in AOK, I also follow David Weinberger <http://www.hyperorg.com/blogger/index.html>. His blog is full of humor, mixed with practical business information, political commentary and just plain fun stuff.

Blogs are also changing politics. You've probably heard of Howard Dean and his blog. I have been watching it since last winter and have been amazed at how successful the blog has been at engaging people around the whole country. People who have never been involved in politics are finding themselves wanting to "do something". Regardless of one's politics, this "blog thing" is changing political campaigning as we know it.

Connie Jackson

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From: "**Melissie Rumizen**" <mcrumizen@b...> Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 9:58 am  
Subject: **My thanks to everyone!**

I have received more than I have given. Thank you all for making this such a rich, learning experience for me. I appreciate your thoughts, your experiences, and your time. I'd also like to welcome Simon, whom I just met at a CoP conference in London. I'd look forward to the upcoming discussion. Warm regards, Melissie

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 7:35 pm  
Subject: **BASICS: My Thanks to Everyone! Melissie Rumizen [+Jerry Ash]**  
From: **Melissie Rumizen**  
Subject: My thanks to everyone!

I have received more than I have given. Thank you all for making this such a rich, learning experience for me. I appreciate your thoughts, your experiences, and your time.

I'd also like to welcome Simon, whom I just met at a CoP conference in London. I'd look forward to the upcoming discussion. Warm regards, Melissie

[+**Jerry Ash**: On behalf of all the AOK members who have participated, lurked and learned, I thank you -- Melissie -- for one of the best dialogues of the year. And, of course, I thank those who shared their thoughts. Without them, this would not be a group discussion. At the closing I usually say more, but the following posts will do it far better. Please read on.

Melissie's welcome of "Simon" is our final guest STAR moderator of 2003 -- Simon Lelic, until recently editor of the ARK Group's Knowledge Management Magazine. I will be posting "Preparing for Conversations with Simon Lelic" in the STAR pages of the AOK Web site tomorrow and Simon will be among us November 17-28.

Simon is still with the ARK Group and is refocusing on a new role that includes KM research. His current project is focused on the track records of some of the established communities of practice (CoPs) on the world scene. We've agreed to open with the CoP thread during his tenure as STAR moderator, with the caveat that we don't just rehash CoP platitudes, but rather, explore the real-life successes, failures and lessons learned among the CoPs Simon has studied in his research.

We take a hiatus from formal email communication in December out of respect for the Holiday Season and the need for a little vacation here at AOK. In January, we start 2004 with a visit from an author not often mentioned in our circle, Rob Lebow, who fits our KM profile completely but mentions the word "knowledge" in his book only once -- "ACCOUNTABILITY: Freedom and Responsibility \*without\* Control." I reviewed his book a couple of months ago and that review is still found in the blog-like center of the AOK homepage:

<http://www.kwork.org>

Melissie, "thanks" is always so inadequate and even more so this time. You were flexible and timely in spite of your travels from here to Europe to the West Coast, coping with the attendant crises of travel you have only partially described. Thanks, Melissie. Thanks for your persistence, the gifts of time, talent, passion and (oh yes) knowledge. You made us think. You are a seasoned AOK member now. Please hang around for the sequels!

Jerry

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Date: Mon Nov 3, 2003 7:44 pm

**Subject: BASICS: Please Join Jack Ring in Thanking Melissie - Jerry Ash**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: My thanks to Melissie --- and Jerry.

What a surprise. I am really impressed with how Melissie got this community stirred up and innovating. Thanks for the inquiring spirit and willingness to probe anywhere. Well worth the time.

[+Jerry Ash: We all know the value of time. All our STARS give an unselfish gift of it. Please join Jack and me in thanking Melissie Rumizen. You know the drill:

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 3:21 am

**Subject: FW: [AOK\_K-Net] BASICS: Please Join Jack Ring in Thanking Melissie**

From: Jerry Ash

Subject: Re: BASICS: Please Join Jack Ring in Thanking Melissie - Jerry Ash

Appluase

From: Maish Nichani

From: Madelyn Blair From Nancy White, a lurker (and fellow muckabout)

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Date: Wed Nov 5, 2003 4:57 pm

**Subject: APPLAUSE: Poetic Thanks from Judith (Shakespeare) Meskill**

**From: Judith Meskill**

Subject: Re: BASICS: Please Join Jack Ring in Thanking Melissie - Jerry Ash

Dear Melissie,

And so I think I thanked in my last post for lighting speed and often stunning wit. But thanks again for giving us your most and bathe in this applause for a short bit.

Would Shakespeare rap this meter if he could replete with passion, grace and some kind thought. In AOK's Star series you were good and conversations true and full you wrought.

A sonnet is some meter wrapped in rhyme a tribute to a person often told in language like a snapshot caught in time of sense and sentiment that won't grow old.

And so in this example of that verse I hope you find it easy to immerse... (^:

Thanks again Melissie!

Judith Meskill

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 12:02 pm

**Subject:** APPLAUSE: Fellow Knowledge Strategist - Paul Cripwell

**From:** J. Paul Cripwell

Subject: RE: [AOK\_K-Net] Digest Number 272

Applause, applause, applause.

The last few weeks have been most enjoyable, a tribute to Melissie, but also the number of posting was amazing.

I also call myself a KM Strategist and these last weeks have really helped me define what it is I do, and how to put it into context for clients.

These last weeks have also firmed my belief that there are some out there that truly understand what is going on at a philosophical, conceptual and cultural level and there are many that just mimic a process. I firmly believe that AOK is a place composed of the former, the latter I have no time for.

Thanks to everyone.

Cheers Paul

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Date: Thu Nov 6, 2003 2:16 pm

**Subject:** BLOGS: Famous Last Words - Judith Meskill

**From:** Judith Meskill

Subject: Re: BASICS, BLOGS & CoPs: \*Applause for Melissie;\* More Thoughts - Daniel Jonas

Daniel,

There are some fabulous minds at work in the 'blogosphere creating innovative methods of presenting, archiving, and mining information that has been 'blogged'.

My weblog serves as a most excellent 'archive' for my Internet 'knowledge' research. I can search my weblog, I can also instantly search the weblogs of a discreet subset of those I admire and whose opinions I value, and then I can search the entire world of weblogs. And, the tools and servers can all be free - through Google and Blogger for example - and freely available to anyone who has the inclination to try weblogging.

A weblog is just a tool - a virtual canvas. Some who utilize this tool are artists and some are, well, not. My personal experience of weblogging has been far from the 'next big oversold massive waste of time.'

Here are a few of my other favorite quotes:

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." \*Western Union memo, 1876

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." \*Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." \*Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of DEC, 1977

"640K ought to be enough for anybody." \* Bill Gates, Microsoft, on size of RAM in computers, 1981

Best regards, Judith Meskill

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Date: Fri Nov 7, 2003 5:00 am

Subject: **BLOGS: Next Big Oversold Waste Of Time.... Or Not - Daniel Jonas**

**From: Daniel Jonas**

Subject: Re: Next Big Oversold Waste Of Time.... Or Not

Judith,

I hope you're right! I would really like it if blogs \*weren't\* the NBOWOT... but it all depends if serious, sensible people like yourself are able to help rein in the hype and the madness. In my experience, it is pretty hard to prevent companies from giving into marketing if they have dollar signs in their eyes. Nonetheless, humans may yet learn from past mistakes.

Daniel

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Date: Fri Nov 7, 2003 5:01 am

Subject: **APPLAUSE: Help - JackRing**

**From: Jack Ring**

Subject: Help

I am in a busy period so scan each message and flag the good ones for later reading. The last two weeks have produced a "flag percentage" of about 75% so now I am in big trouble. Don't even have time to tell Judith what great apercu's were caused by her response on Blogs as simulation.

But this is not the tme for empathy. Keep up the creativity and clarification. What a good group.

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