KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING:

Reflecting on successes and framing futures

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Introductions

- Authors
- Audience?
Overview

- Paper explores Knowledge Management (KM) in an IT project in a university
- Lifelong Learning: individual perspective
  KM: organisational perspective
- Audience members are invited to relate the KM practices discussed to their own experience of lifelong learning practices
- We show that the KM practices in question are rich and diverse
- In reflecting on successes and framing futures we suggest an awareness of the rich and diverse ways learning occurs.
Model for Exploring KM

Organisational Knowledge Management

Soft Systems
- Networks
- Culture

Hard Systems
- Systematic Education
- Storage Systems
Soft Systems

- Networks
  - Social Networks
  - Communities of Practice
- Culture

Culture is a broad term; we use it to include skills, attitudes and motivations that promote learning and knowledge management such as openness to new ideas, openness to…
Hard Systems

- Systematic Education
  - Formal training, courses
- Storage Systems
  - Policies, manuals, documentation
The Case Study

A project to implement elements of a Human Resource Information System between June and November 2007

The presentation will explore networks and, if time permits, storage systems to leave time for a discussion. The full paper explores all four.
Networks

- Project needed to blend HR and IT knowledge. Staff recruited from these two groups; they provided and maintained networks back to their original divisions.

- External networks
  - Software vendor supported network
  - User base

  Group communication: e-mail lists and conferences
  Person to person: e-mail and telephone
Champions

as implementation tactic, key staff in various faculties and divisions were picked as Champions, and they were provided with extra training to act as nodal knowledge centres.

*Knowledge transfer was two-way. They also advised on likely practical problems.*
Contrast Networks

Identified and communicated with those who may be antagonistic to the project – exchange of views and ideas
Formal Approval/Consultation

Use formal university protocols to tap into others’ expertise, through process of getting sign-off from e.g. Vice Chancellor’s Executive and Staff Consultative Committee.
Networks (Cont’d)

- Mentoring, Coaching and Supervision

- Tapping into university’s academic knowledge to support project goals

Both recognised by the project with an attempt to implement, but not very successful
Storage Systems

*Standard framework of*

- External law and standards
- University statutes, policies and rules
- Detailed procedures and how-to documents
Storage Systems (Cont’d)

Storage systems are now largely computerised, and easily accessible

- both federal and state law is available off the web
- University policies (~450) available off the web
- Much of procedure stored in web or in “learning management systems”
However, these tend to be huge (e.g., six polices on leave), and knowledge of what to look for and how remains complex. For example, when a technical legal issue came up, project first networked with the university lawyer, and then read the legislation.
Storage Systems (Cont’d)

Project responsible for capturing and storing knowledge

- Computer system collected and stored data
- Project created a significant amount of documentation

However, emphasis appeared to be more on collection than on ease of future use.
Discussion

Is the framework a useful model?

Organisational Knowledge Management

- Soft Systems
  - Networks
  - Culture
- Hard Systems
  - Systematic Education
  - Storage Systems
Discussion

Parallels between KM and lifelong learning?

- Networks
- Culture
- Systematic Education
- Storage Systems
Authors’ Conclusion

In reflecting on successes and framing futures we suggest an awareness of the rich and diverse ways learning occurs.