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KnowBits

- a. Changes to the ACCSYS Corporation Web Site

We have made some changes to the ACCSYS Corporation Web Site where the knowldgWORKS News archive is maintained. These changes are part of our continued evolution of the site to provide excellent information about knowledge management, business application of technology, and software design and development. A site search capability has been added to make finding information on the site easier. Keep your eye on the site as we will be adding and evolving it. The ACCSYS Corporation Web Site is at <http://www.accsys-corp.com>.

- b. Problems with the Knowledge Work Readiness Assessment

Some of the feedback we have received about the Knowledge Work Readiness Assessment has been how it does not work. We did some research and made some changes, and now the assessment will run in your browser. You will still need to download the Authorware Web Player. Once you have done that you can run the assessment by clicking on the icon on the download page. You can access the Knowledge Work Readiness Assessment at <http://www.accsys-corp.com/useassessment.htm>.

- c. The Taxonomy - An Update

In our ongoing effort to work on the taxonomy for knowledge work, we have come up with a preliminary set of categories for your review. They are listed below. They are not organized in any particular way - this is an attempt to get the possible categories and represents the beginning of a strawman for the taxonomy.

People
Communities
Individuals
Leadership
Sveiby
Prusak
Stewart
Senge
@Brint
Smith Weaver Smith
Knowledge
Tools
Knowledge Representation
Linear
Taxonomy
Discussion Groups
Ontology
AI
Semantic Networks
Rules
Frames
Epistemology
Methods and Processes
Knowledge Capture
Knowledge Acquisition
Interviews
Knowledge Deployment
Search
Vendors
Business Processes
Interpersonal
Learning Organizations
Business Cases for Knowledge Work
Sources
Technology
Messaging
Groupware
Lotus Notes
Internet Discussions
Email

Agent
Autonomy
Organizing
Plumtree
Natrificial
IBM
New Technology
Mappucino
Search Tools
Verity
WebFerret
Retrieval
Excalibur
Issues
Trust and Respect
Communities
History

As you can see in this list, there is an attempt to identify classes and instances. They are not distinguished in the list, but will be as the taxonomy is developed.

d. Smith Weaver Smith

As I mentioned in last week's newsletter, knowldgWORKS News has another home at <http://www.smithweaversmith.com>. The newsletters are posted at this site in a discussion format on a weekly basis. The host, Barbara Weaver Smith maintains this site as a portal to her organization and the significant discussions about corporate organizations and knowledge work. The knowldgWORKS News discussion is up and running with commentary about the most recent newsletters on an ongoing basis. I invite you to visit the site, and participate in the discussions.

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Volume 1 Number 16
Introduction to Personal Knowledge Effectiveness

Knowledge Work represents a problem for business. Those that are enlightened understand what knowledge work is about and try to integrate it into their cultures. Evidence exists for the potential advantage of knowledge

management programs, but because knowledge management represents a moving target for the most part, explaining it to an organization and getting an organization to act as a "knowledge culture" remains a significant challenge for most organizations. For that reason it makes some sense to approach knowledge work and knowledge management in an organization from the top-down AND the bottom-up.

We hear of practitioners speaking of having conversations with groups of people to learn where the knowledge resides in an organization. Learning about where knowledge resides gives one a rough map of the knowledge landscape in an organization, and from this a knowledge worker can locate the knowledge and begin the collection process. Interestingly enough, group information about knowledge often is really held by individuals within an organization. Often during the life of a team, knowledge is maintained by a group of people, but usually after the group disbands (as is typical in today's business environment), the knowledge in that group will usually be kept by one or two members of the group.

My own theory about knowledge work is that individuals are usually the repositories for organizational knowledge. Any individual's knowledge may, for a time, be coalesced into group knowledge, and perhaps this knowledge will eventually be coalesced into organizational knowledge which provides value for the entire organization. But, generally the knowledge life cycle is such that organizational knowledge eventually resides with a small number of individuals.

Since most knowledge work efforts are post-hoc and require a knowledge work expert to "uncover" latent knowledge, the question becomes, how can organizations encourage a proactive attitude towards maintaining a continual flow of information and knowledge so that post-hoc efforts can be minimized or even eliminated? Such an approach requires a benefit to those participating in the process. The question of, "what do I get out of this?" becomes a most salient one in order to encourage good knowledge management behaviors.

A Definition of Personal Knowledge Effectiveness

Personal Knowledge Effectiveness relies on the incorporation of habits and behaviors that encourage

individuals to leverage their knowledge, experiences, and information into improving their daily lives both within and beyond their places of business.

The fundamental idea of Personal Knowledge Effectiveness is this: In order to make the most out of knowledge and experience, one must become disciplined about maintaining a record of that knowledge and experience. This record, if properly designed, created, and used, can become part of group or organizational knowledge and experience. The architecture of such a system will be covered in a later newsletter.

The fundamental components of a process for Personal Knowledge Effectiveness are Capture, Understand, Evaluate, Organize, and Deploy or CUEOD for short.

Capture (record, acquire): As individuals we are exposed to masses of data and information on a daily basis. Some of this information might be useful to us - it might enable us to do things better - and some may not . If we encounter a piece of information that might be useful, we need to keep track of it. Unless we have photographic memories, it is likely that such useful information will be lost unless it is recorded. A good strategy to begin Personal Knowledge Effectiveness is to decide how useful pieces of information and knowledge will be recorded.

Understand: When we participate in experiences and are exposed to masses of information we need to understand these in order to evaluate their value . Without delving too deeply into the definition of understanding, we can stipulate that understanding means relating information or knowledge to existing information or knowledge in order to enable us to do more things or to do things we already do better. If our new knowledge does not fit, then either it is not valuable, or we have not recognized its value. Inability to recognize the relationship between disparate information can prevent us from recognizing creative new opportunities.

Evaluate: Whether we keep the new information or throw it away depends on our perception of the value of that knowledge. To effectively evaluate new knowledge, we need to be able to understand it in terms of both its current and its future benefit. Having a way to estimate the value of the knowledge is important when making the keep or toss

decision. There are many different ways of placing a value on knowledge. For example, a simple "gestalt" 5 point scoring scale is a simple way to value knowledge.

Organize: If you can't retrieve the knowledge or information when you need it, then it is of no value to you. Part of Personal Knowledge Effectiveness is having a means to organize valuable information and knowledge. Over time the value of certain knowledge may change. Therefore, when we formulate our organizing strategy we must allow for sufficient flexibility.

Our organization of information and knowledge should not be limited to the purely linear view available with, for example, a file-based organization. A higher-value organization might allow for links between different pieces of information or knowledge. Capturing the relationships is as important as capturing the knowledge, for a change of links may most accurately model some changes in the value of knowledge over time.

Deploy: After you have captured, understood, evaluated, and organized your knowledge or information, how do you plan to share it? This is an area where technology may be able to offer some assistance. You may, for example, want to create a personal knowledge Intranet where you make information and knowledge you are maintaining available to a group, team, or organization. What you make available depends on the needs and backgrounds of the group's members. The value of particular knowledge may differ among the individual who is using the CUEOD process and the various members of the group who will ultimately access it.

CUEOD offers a framework to begin a program of Personal Knowledge Effectiveness. There are numerous approaches to creating an individual program of CUEOD and a number of ways to implement the approach you choose. Both the approach and implementation may depend on the need to integrate individual knowledge with group or organizational knowledge.

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You may type an x in the subject or body if your e-mail program requires.

Next week's issue: On the Design of a Tool for Knowledge Work

Previous issues of the knowldgWORKS News are archived at <http://www.accsys-corp.com>.

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