

knowldgWORKS News Number 31 July 2, 2000
Who Needs Knowledge Management?

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- A. The Prototypical Knowledge Management Organization - A Reference Report Available From ACCSYS Corporation

As part of my ongoing effort to create useful reference materials for those of us involved in knowledge management, I have prepared a report entitled, "The Prototypical Knowledge Management Organization," that is available for purchase. The report costs \$25 and can be downloaded from the ACCSYS Corporation web site at <http://www.accsys-corp.com>. A brief synopsis of the report follows.

Synopsis: The Prototypical Knowledge Management Organization. Dr. R. Kaplan. ACCSYS Corporation. May 2000.

This report focuses on the "design" of a prototypical knowledge management organization. The premise of this report is to design an organization and describe the positions in it that would support a complete knowledge management effort. The report presents the organizational design, describes 11 positions, and provides detailed job descriptions for each of these positions. The content of the report could be used as the basis for a company's own knowledge management effort, as a reference for the necessary positions and the specific requirements for these positions. In addition, the report also describes a "starter" or "seed" organization that would serve as the

Knowledge management creates a fabric of related knowledge including principles, facts, information, rules of thumb, etc. The fabric becomes a very powerful thing when it enables people to understand a particular domain as a continuum. So although algorithms and the classification scheme that has been used and the one proposed by the author may represent Algorithmic science (assuming there is such a thing), they do not take into account other, relevant developments. Let's consider one additional aspect that might enrich the classification scheme and make it more relevant to present day activities in computer science.

There has been extensive development in the area of object-oriented paradigms. Object-oriented paradigms are related to algorithmic science by virtue of the patterns represented by their object classes. Patterns are another kind of algorithmic description. And patterns represent abstractions of the processes that will be defined in the object-oriented paradigm. Likewise, when we describe algorithmic types like divide-and-conquer and Greedy-methods, we are defining patterns. To consider any classification scheme for algorithms without considering object-oriented patterns leaves out an extremely important consideration when proposing any new algorithmic classification scheme. The author of the paper made no mention of object-oriented paradigms. But what does this have to do with knowledge management?

Let's suppose we could map the potential domain of algorithms. What would this include? It would include many different type of algorithms, the current types of classifications of algorithms, and algorithm construction methods among other things. As we began to map the domain of potential algorithmic knowledge we would get a complete sense of the different possible classes of algorithms.

Although this example only represents a small portion of the algorithmic domain it was clear to me that the author of the article did not do this. He took a limited view, identifying some of the more useful algorithmic types with very little evidence of their relevance to the new classifications. I contend that if he used a more knowledge-based approach the ultimate result would have been more relevant and more useful to present day algorithmic science.

Classification is a knowledge management task. A classification scheme not only requires specification but also testing. How do we know if a classification scheme can be used to describe what the classification scheme was intended for? We test. Testing verifies the efficacy of any classification scheme. If a process does not test well, then the process is probably requires adjustment at best and replacement at worst. Writing a classification scheme is not just about defining classes. It is about creating valuable knowledge and managing that knowledge. The conclusion of this observation is that perhaps that which we call knowledge management is something we all need (or should all do) on a regular basis to take advantage of the rich fabric of knowledge.

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The knowldgWORKS News is written in its entirety by Randy Kaplan and edited by Harriet Trenholm. Suggestions for the newsletter should be sent to rkaplan@accsys-corp.com. All suggestions will be considered and always appreciated.

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