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KnowBits

- 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 beginnings of a knowledge management group within a larger organization.

#### B. In good company - Certification Revisited

Back in September, the knowldgWORKS News topic was certification. If you remember, I posed an argument as to why certification might not be such a good idea. It seems that there are others that might agree. Tom Davenport, director of the Anderson Consulting Institute for Strategic Change, and author of "Working Knowledge," seems to share in my skepticism. In the October 15th, 2000 issue of CIO magazine, Mr. Davenport is quoted as saying that, "the field of knowledge management is too unfocused and in flux for a certification program to be particularly useful. I wouldn't put a whole lot of weight on certification if I were a hiring manager." At \$3500 one should think about this pretty seriously.

#### C. Knowledge Management Magazine - Personal Knowledge Management

Check this out - In the December 2000 issue of Knowledge Management magazine, Steve Barth addresses the subject of Personal Knowledge Management. Seeking input from many different sources (including your knowldgWORKS News editor), Steve does an excellent job of discussing this topic and presents a good representation of tools to aid in PKM.

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Enfish OneSpace

On the advice of Steve Barth, an editor of Knowledge Management Magazine, I decided to take a look at Enfish's OneSpace ([www.enfish.com](http://www.enfish.com)). Steve recommended this software as a tremendously powerful knowledge management tool - one that he personally finds hard to live without. It was about time for me to do a knowldgWORKS technology review so I decided to have a look at OneSpace. Here are my thoughts about this product and where it fits in the knowledge management tool space. Before I do so, let me set the

context for what I look for when I consider any software that I might personally use.

There are two things I look for when I consider whether I would use any software. My first consideration is what the software does - and closely related to this is do I have a problem that can be solved by the software? If I do not have the latter than it is usually not the case that a piece of software aimed at a problem that I don't have would be in any way attractive. Unless the software was able to convince me that I actually have a problem that it would help solve - the old solution looking for a problem scenario.

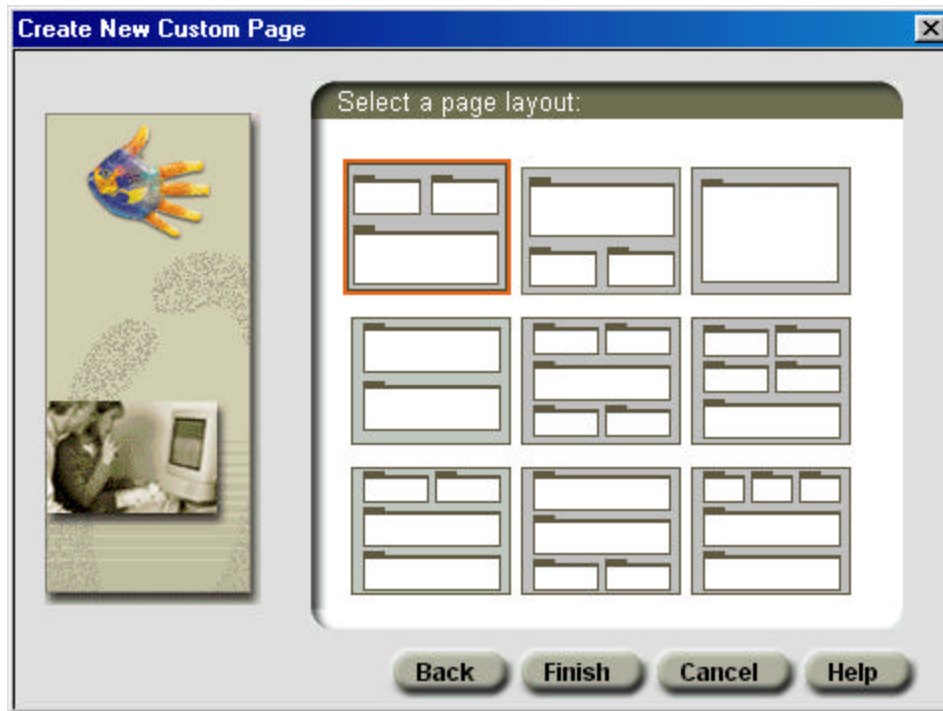
The second thing I consider when looking at any software is how it does what it does. In today's mass-market software we are forced to accept the software designer's ideas about how we should be using the software they design and implement. Now granted that WYSIWYG is a good thing, and I like mice, but beyond this, the thought that goes into how program elements are assembled to create functionality is very critical to me. And most software that is created today does not seem to really consider how people will use that software. I say this carefully of course because I am presently using Microsoft Word and I am sure that Bill has incorporated special monitoring code into Microsoft Word that will cause it to crash if I write something bad about it.

In the context of CUEOD (Capture, Understand, Evaluate, Organize, and Deploy), OneSpace is fundamentally an O (Organize) and D (Deploy) tool. It is a portal into YOUR information. Through multiple frames and layers you are able to assemble the information that you use on a regular basis into a rather pleasing display. It includes various navigational tools - a "personal information" navigator and tabbed frames. It comes preset with certain basic information so that you don't have to start from scratch. It is able to launch other programs to view documents, and one of the first things that it does when you install it is to traverse your system for documents and then create a searchable index of these documents. This is a nice feature - one that was apparently adopted from the previous Enfish product - Tracker.



## The Onespace Interface

On the surface the interface looks fairly intuitive. When you click on things they pretty much act the way you would suspect. One thing I wanted to do was to create my own page (information is organized into pages). Creating a new page was fairly straightforward. You get to select from a series of pre-designed pages. Once you have chosen a page format, you can configure the elements of the page. This is where some of the intuitiveness of the interface begins to disappear. It was not at all clear how to set a particular section of a page to a particular URL. This took a couple of tries to figure out how this was accomplished. I am still trying to figure out how to delete a preset section of a page. These seemingly trivial operations should be trivially apparent and they are not - at least not to me. So although OneSpace's interface is certainly slick, it lacks certain thoughtfulness in considering how people would actually use the product. I found the same to be true of the earlier Tracker product. This then takes me to the question of, what the software does? And what problem does the software solve? And ultimately, would I use it?



### Custom Page Selection

This question is answered for me by considering what problem would OneSpace solve for me personally? In the universe of the issues that I deal with on a day-to-day basis, does OneSpace offer a compelling enough solution to address any of these problems? Or does it offer some feature that makes it so attractive that I would adopt OneSpace into my daily activities?

The answer to the first question for me is that OneSpace does not offer a significantly or incrementally compelling solution to any of the issues I face on a day-to-day basis that would warrant transitioning from my current technology platforms to the OneSpace platform. In some ways, I believe the vast variety of elements that could be represented in the OneSpace interface might make some of the issues I face from an information organization standpoint even more complex. A goal I have for any CUEOD technology is that it should decrease complexity and not increase it. That said, if you need an organizational tool that allows you to present data and information you use regularly with relative ease, the OneSpace portal is certainly a candidate technology for this purpose. Having said this, there are other software options and one should be careful to consider these in the selection of a technology for this purpose.

For the second question, I would also answer no - that OneSpace does not offer any significantly advantageous compelling technology that would attract me to use it. In other words, there are no elements of OneSpace that would entice me to switch to its use on a regular basis. Now, if OneSpace was to incorporate their indexing engine into a display like Natrifacial's Brain producing a visual map of my information world, I might very well consider this as compelling enough to use it. Similarly, if OneSpace was available through many devices (handheld, laptop, mobile phone,) I would also consider its use.

In closing, this product is certainly worthy of consideration in the space of personal knowledge management tools and specifically for O(Organizing) and D (Deploying) applications. On the other hand, the more sophisticated and demanding user may be left wanting more from this product to make the investment in its use. For me, it is a wait and see proposition.

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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](mailto:rkaplan@accsys-corp.com). All suggestions will be considered and always appreciated.

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