Enabling conditions for knowledge creation within blog communities: Literature, models and conceptual framework
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Abstract

Organisations increasingly face the competing desires to nurture and convert individual practices, relationships and experience into organisational knowledge while employing growth strategies which often limit the amount of face-to-face (FTF) contact individuals have in which to exchange tacit knowledge. In an attempt to reconcile these seemingly contradictory goals, some organisations have turned to collaborative technologies and social media made popular outside of organisational boundaries as a means of connecting individuals and forming virtual communities.

While some organisations are integrating social media with their knowledge management (KM) practices, extant research on KM has traditionally included information technology (IT) solely for the facilitation of codifying and managing explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge exchange has been seen primarily as a FTF activity unrelated to the IT environment. However, with the evolution of IT from a purely information management role to a more collaborative and socially networked environment, there is an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of social media, such as blogs, wikis, and social networking sites, as a mechanism for knowledge exchange, creation and conversion.

This presentation provides an overview of a research study on the potential for knowledge creation to take place within a virtual environment. Specifically, it is an investigation of whether blog communities provide the enabling conditions necessary for knowledge creation. The presentation will include a theoretical overview of KM and computer-mediated communication (CMC) literature as well as the underlying virtual ethnography and analysis methods which will be used as part of the research study. Additionally, it will discuss the challenges of researching the emerging field of blogging including the need to adapt the ethnographic approach as well as analysis and interpretation techniques from FTF to cyber interactions.