Proceedings of the
First iKMS International Conference
on Knowledge Management

People, Knowledge and Technology:

What Have We Learnt So Far?

Editors

Bruno TREZZINI

Patrick LAMBE

Suliman HAWAMDEH

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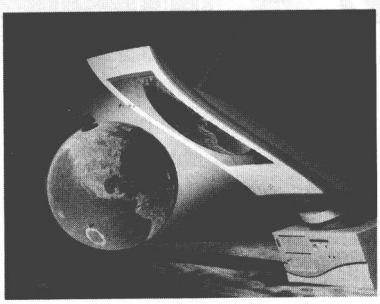

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Editors

Bruno TREZZINI

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Patrick LAMBE

Straits Knowledge, Singapore

Suliman HAWAMDEH

University of Oklahoma, USA

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People, Knowledge and Technology:

What Have We Learnt So Far?

PREFACE

This is a volume born out of passion and commitment. You are holding in your hands the proceedings of the *First International Conference on Knowledge Management* (iCKM 2004) organized by the *Information and Knowledge Management Society* (iKMS) and held in Singapore from December 13 to 15, 2004.

iKMS is a non-profit society which started as a knowledge management interest group in Singapore in 1999 with the objectives of promoting awareness of KM research and practice and discussing issues related to the development of knowledge management locally and internationally. The degree of interest and participation grew rapidly, so the founding members decided to register a society. As a result, iKMS was officially born in January 2001. Besides having become a major force in the local KM scene, iKMS created an international presence by publishing the first international refereed journal in knowledge management. The *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management* (JIKM) is the Society's flagship and is currently published by *World Scientific* (www.worldscinet.com/jikm/jikm.shtml). In many ways, iCKM 2004 marks another important step in the coming of age of iKMS.

By choosing the conference theme "People, knowledge and technology: what have we learned so far?" we wanted to elicit contributions that would shed some light on the current state of the art in KM as well as on the future challenges that lie ahead. How much has KM come of age as an academic discipline as well as a professional practice? In particular, we wanted to bridge the too frequent gap that exists between KM research and KM practice, by bringing academics, practitioners and providers into the same space, to discuss their common issues.

It is not especially easy to strike a balance between the particular needs and interests of academics, practitioners and solution providers in a conference program. However, we hope that in the end we managed to devise a flexible and productive program that allowed for maximal cross-fertilization between the different constituencies within the KM arena. The first and second conference days focused on insights and cases from KM research. On the second day country reports were also scheduled, offering insights into the state of KM adoption and practice in the Asian-Pacific region, the natural geographical focus of this year's conference. The focus of the last day shifted to the specifics of KM practice in Singapore, with case studies from Singaporean organisations. The final afternoon of the conference was devoted to knowledge sharing between speakers and delegates in a forum facilitated according to the principles of open space technology.

We are particularly pleased to have secured the support of four eminent personalities in the field of knowledge management as keynote speakers for iCKM 2004. In their addresses they shared their ideas on the power of social networks (Rob Cross),

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knowledge strategies for innovation (Josef Hofer-Alfeis), the future of KM (Dave Snowden), and metadata and taxonomies (David Weinberger).

This volume contains 32 oral presentations as well as the abstracts of the four keynote addresses and 37 poster presentations. The papers were grouped into six major themes, reflecting common concerns addressed by the authors: (1) communities and collaboration; (2) knowledge sharing; (3) culture as context; (4) knowledge management strategies; (5) knowledge creation; and (6) knowledge discovery. Many of these papers reflect the growing interest in non-technological aspects of KM. The insight that information technology is no panacea has become somewhat of a truism in the KM field. Technology continues to play an enabling role, but it is often subsidiary to social and cultural success factors.

Organizing an international conference is no mean feat for such a young organization, and it would certainly not have been possible without the dedication and active support of all iKMS executive committee members in a period of planning that spanned two years. We are also particularly grateful to our reviewers and the members of the international program committee for their advice and support in preparing the program. To these contributors, who freely gave of their time and insight, we offer our deepest thanks.

We would also like to thank Max Phua from *World Scientific* as well as Jane Lim and Khoo Cheng Hoon from *Meeting Matters International* for their logistic and administrative help in organizing this conference. Last but not least, our thanks go to all speakers and conference participants who made this event a worthwhile one.

Preparations for the second and third iCKM are well under way, and we hope that we will see many of you again in Tulsa (Oklahoma, USA) in 2005 and in London (University of Greenwich) in 2006.

Bruno Trezzini
Patrick Lambe
Suliman Hawamdeh

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PART I

Abstracts of Keynote Addresses

THE HIDDEN POWER OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

ROB CROSS

McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia
robcross@virginia.edu

In today's flatter organizations work of significance demands effective collaboration within and across functional, physical and hierarchical boundaries. In all but the most rote manufacturing and service environments work has become a collaborative endeavor accomplished less through standardized processes and formal structure than informal networks of relationships. This presentation will demonstrate why and how to pay attention to the health of networks based on in-depth experience with over 60 organizations in the last five years. Specifically, the session will:

- Demonstrate the importance of networks in terms of performance (organizational and individual), learning, innovation and quality of work life.
- Provide case examples of strategic problems organizations uncover when conducting a social network analysis and means of correcting them.
- Characterize networks of high performing individuals and provide diagnostic questions that people can apply to assess their own networks.
- Describe new work assessing energy in networks, both how it is created and transferred as well as its impact on performance and innovation.

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