

TACIT KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION VIA TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN NETWORKS

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The management of knowledge has become a critical concern for many organizations. To assist, numerous vendors offer an array of technologies. But, as the conference theme asks, “what have we learnt so far?” with respect to the role, interplay and appropriate balance of “People, Knowledge and Technology”. Our work is specifically focused on the tacit knowledge, which is that component either gained through self-experience or through working with people who possess “know-how” (Roberts 2001). Research indicates the only way for soft knowledge to be effectively transferred is through the socialization process (Roberts 2001). Furthermore the dissemination of tacit knowledge can be a problem where organizations rely too heavily on information technology (Koski 2001; Walsham 2001). For an organization to benefit from its tacit knowledge resources it must undertake to examine the richness of the different forms of communication mediums it makes use of (Schulz and Jobe 2001; Koskinen 2000). Based on the literature and three case studies, the optimal organization for tacit knowledge transfer contains highly interconnected social human networks and is minimally reliant on the use of technology for communication. Our findings bring into question whether the modern organization is the most appropriate environment for tacit knowledge diffusion.

References

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