

Chapter 15

Empowering Social Knowledge with Information Technology: Technological and Cultural Issues Convergence

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ABSTRACT

Social knowledge is not a new category; however, in these times of information-communications systems maturity, it becomes an extremely important and valuable asset. In the context of social knowledge, information technology should be constantly harmonized with cultural milieu characterized mostly by invisible culture and its actions. The aim is to make the real and acceptable convergence of cultural and technological issues. Since the knowledge becomes social only with the communication process, it is deeply connected with the terms of media. Social knowledge is alike any media activity where two-tier principles is included consisting cultural (politics and social paradigm) and technological (information tools) issues. The real drawbacks of social knowledge based on information-communications systems that means the dependency on information technology, is about the continuity - the entire social knowledge base could be fragmented or even lost for future generations. The information/digital content keeping technologies are developed well, but the knowledge and invisible culture assets are under the special treatment if we want to make our social knowledge as the legacy for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is embedded in people gathered in communities and networks and all knowledge is broadly socially mediated and access to knowledge is by connecting to people that know. Thus, the knowing is an act of participation and is more

living process than solely acquisition of an object. Lasting knowledge denotes knowing more than definitions, concepts and relationships. It is sometimes feeling what is right in particular situation requiring personal engagement, passion and a community to emerge.

Knowledge is also presented as the act or state of knowing; clear perception of fact, truth, or duty; certain apprehension; familiar cognizance;

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cognition. Knowledge, which is the highest degree of the speculative faculties, consists in the perception of the truth of affirmative or negative propositions (Locke, 1689).

Knowing is an act of participation. Learning and knowledge require culture and tools (technology) that with communication make ecosystem for social knowledge. These issues correlates to the term of social mediation that is the key in helping us make meaning and gain understanding. The process of social activities supply shared meaning where every individual established its own cognitive world. New insights arise with the interactions of communities, connections and reflections where identity and meaningfulness are the wellspring of creativity. In fact, personal identity and context are keys in all forms of knowledge, and they determine engagement in dialog and control of behavior. Since community is prerequisite for continuous learning, knowledge needs negotiation mediated social values and reflection. It means that we must separate knowledge from personal knowing and individual competence and skills. Knowledge is situated into entire culture and is present in social actions, inventions, artifacts, etc.

It has been argued that organizational culture can be highly influenced by societal culture (Hofstede, 2001). People's organizational behaviors may be partly related to their attitudes, beliefs, and values, which may be affected by some cultural factors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). In addition, researchers and management theorists understand organizational phenomena based, in part, on some assumptions related to their societies' cultures (Hofstede, 1993). This suggests that aspects of some management theories and models, which have come from highly developed countries, may not be completely consistent with the cultural characteristics of other countries, and vice versa. This recognition has encouraged some researchers to examine management theories and models from cultural perspectives (for example, Management by Objectives, Maslow's Theory). It is of special interest for research in the context

of Internet and Web 2/Web 3 technologies that open up the communication space regardless real physical position of group, community and organization.

Knowledge

Knowledge has several synonyms connected in terminology with the terms of information, learning, erudition, lore, and scholarship. These nouns refer to what is known, as through study or experience. Knowledge is the broadest term, and there was a need to find systematical view of information base that builds knowledge corps. Thus, theory of science is organized knowledge (Spencer, 1929). Spencer also stated the knowledge as the scientific study of education, psychology, sociology, and ethics from an evolutionary point of view (Eiseman, 1973, p. 153).

The traditional definition of knowledge is 'justified true belief'. There are many problems with that definition, but it does point to the fact that we think of 'knowledge' as being something broadly mental and propositional. Knowledge, in other words, is a macro phenomenon, like an entire set of connections, and not a micro phenomenon, like a single connection of information nodes.

Knowledge per se, incorporates several meanings, all of them regarding individual state, action or process.

- a. The state or fact of knowing
- b. Familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study
- c. The sum or range of what has been perceived, discovered, or learned
- d. Learning; erudition: teachers of great knowledge
- e. Specific information about something

The first hint of what knowledge is all about came from Locke (1689) who stated the Knowledge as the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. He views us as having

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