Chapter 15
Challenges of Structure and Organization in Medium–Sized Content

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ABSTRACT

Organizational knowledge management resources are a combination of articles, guidelines, and process documents. The content in these resources typically ranges from about a few words to a few hundred words. These pieces of content are called medium-sized content. While most organizations do not pose a limit on how long or short each content piece should be, most content sizes default to this limit due to various reasons. Assigning a metadata and taxonomy to the medium-sized content pieces are challenging because of a limited number of repetition of keywords, the limited size of the content, and the existence of other content without which this content is not conceptually complete. This results in challenges for knowledge managers in organizing and structuring this content as well as making it intelligent enough for search engines and business intelligence tools. This chapter presents an approach to creating metadata for these content pieces by proposing a three structure metadata consisting of a static part, a dynamic part, and a conceptual part that links to other pieces of related information.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational knowledge resources are used by employees to improve their explicit knowledge (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). These resources help the employees to perform their job responsibilities efficiently. Organizations have dedicated individuals and teams that develop these knowledge resources. Most of the knowledge resources within an organization are in the form of articles, how-tos, learning assessments, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and data sets (Alavi, Timothy R. Kayworth, & Leidner, 2005-6). While the exact guidelines used to create and develop these articles vary from organization to organization, the main goal in creating them is to be able to convey the right message to the right user base at the right time of need (Grant, 1996). As is the case with most organizational content, the content sizes are neither too lengthy like scholarly articles and book chapters, nor too small like short Message Services (SMS) and chat session conversations (Burbidge, 2003-12-03), twitter feeds (Johnson, 2009) and ticker notifications. All the content that fits this profile are referred to as medium sized content.

In order to create an effective knowledge management system, it is necessary to structure and organize the different pieces of content such that user can find the right information at the right time (Becerra-Fernandez, Gonzalez, & Sabherwal, 2004). In most large organizations, content gets created by content authors and stored in a content management system. The content resides in a conceptual structure so that it is easy for the knowledge managers to fetch and display the information in different knowledge management systems that are used in the organization (McInerney & Day, 2007). To make the content smart and easily readable by the different systems, search engines and other meta-analytics tools, the content is marked up and tagged with suitable keywords and metadata. The metadata of the content is a description of the data as well as the rules that will be used to display the data. The knowledge

management systems use this metadata to decide if the particular content should be visible to a given user base and the location in the navigation where it resides. Most content management systems have a provision to assign keywords and metadata to a piece of content and it is the responsibility of the content author to make sure that the right metadata is applied to the right pieces of content.

As is the case in most organizational knowledge management systems, the content (like articles, technical documents, how-tos and FAQs) are created as a medium sized content (Karner & Droschl, 2002). This is a deliberate decision by most content authors since the article size is just sufficient to hold the user's attention span and deliver the appropriate information to him or her. From a cognitive point of view, users may deter reading a larger piece of content in their busy work schedule where they may not have a single slot of time available for them to read the entire content in one session. From a user experience point of view, many user experience experts recommend the use of medium sized content as the size is most suitable for display in web-based and mobile devices. The screens on desktops, laptops, smart phones and tablets can effectively be used to display the medium sized articles without having the user to scroll up and down the screen (Karner & Droschl, 2002). Even if the user chooses to print the articles out, they can be fit in a one or two page format that is cognitively easier for the user to process.

In addition to the most common model of knowledge management systems where content authors are responsible for creating content and adhering to guidelines, more and more of the content generated is derived from the users themselves. Capturing and integrating user generated content is becoming a very prominent aspect of the knowledge in knowledge management systems. Outside the bounds of the organization, the statistics favor the importance of user generated content. As per Wikipedia, the average number of words in a Wikipedia article varies between 300

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