
Special Issue: Knowledge Management

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VARUN GROVER is a Professor of Information Systems, Business Partnership Foundation Fellow, and Distinguished Researcher at the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina. Dr. Grover has published extensively in the information systems field and has been recognized in recent studies as one of the most productive researchers in the field based on publications in the top information system (IS) journals. Dr. Grover’s area of interest is the effective deployment of information systems in strategic initiatives like Electronic Commerce, Business Process Change, and knowledge management. His work has appeared in *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Communications of the ACM*, *Decision Sciences*, *IEEE Transactions*, *California Management Review*, among others. He recently coedited his second book, *Making Business Process Change Payoff: Guidelines for the 21st Century*, and two Special Issues of *JMIS* on the topic of business process change. Dr. Grover has also served as the Special Editor for issues of *Database*, which focused on IT Futures, celebrating the 50th anniversary of ACM, of the *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, and of *Decision Sciences*. Dr. Grover is the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Decision Sciences Institute and two-time recipient of the Alfred G. Smith Award for Excellence in Teaching. He is currently serving on the Board of Editors, is an Associate Editor of five IS journals, and is an active member of INFORMS, ACM, DSI, and AIS.

IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT is here to stay. Although the movement has aspects of faddishness (an abundance of conferences, books, and articles in the business press), and therefore may lose some of its current level of visibility, it must become part of the basic fabric of successful businesses. There are far too many knowledge workers dealing with too much knowledge for knowledge management to disappear. While knowledge management was developed first in industries and functions that are basically selling knowledge—professional services, pharmaceuticals, research and development functions—it is quickly moving into other industries, including manufacturing, financial services, even government and military organizations. It can be expected that at some point every industry will view itself as knowledge-intensive and will adopt knowledge management approaches in virtually every business unit and function.

To date the primary emphasis has been on building *professional* capabilities—knowledge management specialists, formal procedures, and separate knowledge management skills. To fully institutionalize knowledge management, the focus must shift to the *amateurs*—those whose roles in organizations are not primarily knowledge management, but accomplishing their real organizational missions. We must begin to hire workers for their aptitude and motivation around knowledge, design knowledge activities into everyday roles, and create a culture in which every worker views knowledge management as part of his or her job.

When we began work on this Special Issue, there was a great deal of business interest in knowledge management. However, formal research in this area had yet to be seen in mainstream IS journals, although the interest was apparent from the incidence of panels and presentations on the topic in IS-related conferences. We sought to remedy this by providing a journal medium for developing some of the interesting work from its nascent stage. We also sought to bridge the gap between research and practice by focusing on research that had direct implications for practitioners struggling to deal with knowledge management issues.

The results of this process can be observed in this issue. The articles represent a blend of topics, methods, and approaches that reflect various aspects of the phenomenon. The authors represented have significant experience in conducting research in field settings. Some of the ideas proposed begin to develop “theory,” whereas others report on field research using qualitative or quantitative methods. All articles develop implications for practice. Further, consistent with practice, there seems to be clear recognition that knowledge is created and applied only in the minds of human beings. Technology can provide assistance in knowledge management, but its importance pales in comparison to developing knowledge-oriented cultures, motivating individuals to share and use knowledge, and encouraging workers to view their jobs in terms of effective knowledge management.