

5. Enhancing KM Capabilities

Capabilities Growing ... Slowly

Although technologies are generally better the practices of KM have changed little over the last few years. Putting KM techniques into practice, especially those involving tacit knowledge, and hence people, seems as problematic as ever. In almost every situation the author has been involved with over the last few years, the same issues surface again and again:

- information is fragmented and often duplicated; staff are not sure where to go for the latest most reliable information
- intranets are often not as well designed and thought through as the organization's external-facing internet
- simple practices like After Action Reviews do not happen routinely
- ownership and responsibilities for managing particular information assets are often unclear
- email is one of the most widely used tools for sharing knowledge, but most users are not using it very effectively.

The capability model of Figure 5.1 has stood the test of time. If any point needs driving home, it is that each layer depends on the others. Therefore, if a new ICT strategy or infrastructure is being developed, those involved with KM must be fully involved as key stakeholders. Similarly, it is no use if top management gives approval to various frameworks or principles but then does not put in place the resources and management structures for these to be followed.

Case Update: IM Principles

The UK's Department of Trade and Industry no longer exists, its functions having been transferred to two other ministries in 2007.

Case Study: Australia's Natural Resources Audit

A good addition to the three examples shown on page 99-100 of the main report is the *Natural Resource Information Management Toolkit* of the Australian government.

Its section on information policy addresses considerations of cost, format, systems design, privacy, copyright and liability. More pertinent, perhaps, is the section called data management principles, where it offers seven principles of good data management. You can substitute the word information for data throughout with equal validity.

1. Define a data policy: "a set of broad, high-level principles which form the guiding framework in which data management can operate".
2. Clear identification of the owner of the data: ownership infers rights in the use and exploitation of the data.
3. Documentation and metadata compilation: "to facilitate subsequent identification, proper management and effective use; and to avoid collection or purchase of the same data more than once".
4. Data quality, standardisation, harmonisation and audit: using standard definition and format, validating (as fit for purpose) and assuring quality
5. Lifecycle control: from business justification through specification, storage and ongoing audit of use and maintenance until it is no longer needed or not cost-effective to retain.
6. Custodianship – the effective management of the data in line with policy.
7. Access and dissemination – as wide an access as possible, commensurate with "copyright or intellectual property rights, or any statutory or non-statutory obligations."

Source:

(<http://nlwra.gov.au/toolkit/contents.html>).