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Knowledge Management Foundations: Constructive and Explanatory Approaches

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Knowledge Management Foundations – Constructive and Explanatory Approaches

Chair: Dr Dennis Hart

Panellists: Dr Henry Linger, Ms Irena Ali and Dr Leoni Warne

Members of the panel have presented both, together and as individuals, at a number of international and national forums such as: INTERACT97 in Sydney, DSS99 in Melbourne; and more recently at ECIS 02 in Gdansk, ACIS02 in Melbourne and conducted a full day workshop on Knowledge Management at HICSS-36 in January 2003.

The panel will be presented by the following members:

Dr Hart is a Senior Lecturer at the Australian National University. His research interests centre on organisational issues surrounding data and information sharing, systems development and information management efforts. Dr Hart has published and presented his work in national and international journals, conferences, workshops, tutorials and panels.

Dr Henry Linger is a Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Healthcare Knowledge Management Program and Deputy Director of the Knowledge Management Research Group at Monash University. Dr Linger conducts research in the area of knowledge work, knowledge management and organisational memory. His work is reported in international journals and conferences and he has presented seminars and workshops both nationally and internationally.

Irena Ali is a Defence Scientist in DSTO. Ms Ali's background is in information management and information seeking. Her work focuses on researching organizational and cultural factors contributing to effective organisational learning. She has published and presented both nationally and internationally in the field of organisational and social learning.

Dr Warne is a senior research scientist responsible for researching and developing Enterprise Social Learning Architectures and Decision Processes. Dr Warne's research work is primarily focused on the social and organisational aspects of information systems. Her work has been presented in numerous international books, journals and conferences.

Abstract: Knowledge management is an important area targeting improvements in organisational functionality and performance. Technological tools of ever increasing sophistication are available for use in achieving the dissemination and sharing of data, information and knowledge across the organisation. However, despite the existence and capability of these tools, knowledge management in many organisations all too often does not deliver the benefits sought from it. Other important issues that arguably play a pivotal role in the success of knowledge management initiatives are organisational and human-related. Holistic knowledge management practice should take such matters more into account than is typically the case. The panel will present two main perspectives on knowledge management efforts, a 'constructivist' one and a 'theoretical' one, with a particular focus on the human and organisational issues involved. Constructive approaches are aimed at enabling purposeful intervention in the organisational world through the creation of environments, techniques, frameworks, and tools that can be applied in practice. Theoretical approaches focus on understanding and explaining the experience of knowledge management as it is encountered in such practice. The two approaches are complementary, in that constructive approaches need to be based on sound theory if they are to be successful and theory deals with the phenomena that arise from the application of constructive approaches in practice. Theory and construction are thus mutually dependent; better understanding of one leads to improvements in the other and the focus of the panel discussion reflects this and it aims to further the linkage and complementary relationship between these two approaches to knowledge management.

