December 1997

Panel 19 What Don't We Know About Managing Knowledge Using Information Technology?

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PANEL 19

WHAT *DON'T* WE KNOW ABOUT MANAGING KNOWLEDGE USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY?

Chairs: **Michael H. Zack**, Northeastern University
Tom Davenport, University of Texas, Austin

Panelists: **Kathleen F. Curley**, The Lotus Institute
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The concept of treating organizational knowledge as a valuable strategic asset has been popularized recently by management and organization theorists. Consulting firms are rushing to create knowledge management practices. Organizations are being advised that to remain competitive, they must efficiently and effectively create, capture, locate, and share their organization's knowledge and expertise and have the ability to bring that knowledge to bear on problems and opportunities. This typically involves the creative application of information technology. Some firms are beginning to adopt knowledge management as part of their overall strategy.

Although the business case for managing organizational knowledge is becoming widely accepted, few organizations today are fully capable of developing and leveraging critical organizational knowledge to improve their performance. While the extant literature calls for effectively managing knowledge, almost no research has been done regarding *how* to do it. The objective of this panel is to engage those who have seriously attempted to leverage knowledge via creative uses of information technology in a discussion about what we *don't* know, to provide guidance for performing useful, applied research by the academic community. As a result of this panel, we intend to frame a program of applied research in organizational knowledge management.

The panel will take the form of a roundtable discussion and workshop. Panelists will briefly state their views on what aspects of knowledge management they find lacking and where they believe useful research should be directed. The panelists will attempt to interactively develop and frame a program of researching knowledge management. Observers will be invited to interact with the panelists toward the end of the workshop.

The panelists will discuss questions covering knowledge management strategy, organizational architecture and capability, technical architecture, and knowledge architecture:

1. In what way does the use of knowledge management technologies support the overall business strategy?
2. What new organizational roles are required to effectively manage knowledge and related technologies and how are they best implemented?
3. What are the best social and cultural characteristics of knowledge-creating organizations and how can they best be developed?
4. How does the particular knowledge management application influence the knowledge processing requirements, the role of interpersonal interaction versus the role of information technology?
5. How should repositories of explicit knowledge be structured to be most meaningful and useful?
6. What indexing and navigation capabilities are needed to effectively leverage knowledge?