

Key support mechanisms in the use phase of the KM life cycle include feedback and tracking systems as well as a variety of dissemination and search technologies. Feedback from automated tracking or direct user feedback is key to improving the processes involved in the KM life cycle. In addition, technology-enabled information dissemination systems, from expert systems and decision support tools, to visualization systems, increase the value of information for specific uses. Similarly, search engines and other technologies allow knowledge workers to navigate through vast collections of information efficiently and effectively.

Archiving

Archiving information involves storing it in a form and format that will survive the elements and time and still be accessible and usable by knowledge workers in the organization. Archiving can involve printing, making electronic copies in several formats on a variety of media, or even outsourcing to an off-site storage facility accessed over the Internet.

Some of the key issues related to the archiving phase of the KM life cycle, depicted in Exhibit 4.5, include access time, provision for security and privacy, selection versioning and indexing of information, the location of archives, the cost of archiving, and the various technologies used, especially those used to filter or select information. From the user's perspective, access time—the time to retrieve specific information from the archive—usually is the most significant day-to-day issue. Depending on the technology underlying the archiving process, access time can range from a few seconds to days, with the greatest delays associated with printed information.

Archives, especially central repositories, are attractive to hackers because of the concentration of information in one place. Making multiple archives protects against fire, flood, or other natural disasters but presents a greater security risk because multiple sites must be covered