Information

In automated KM systems, information is commonly in the form of electronic files. In manual KM systems, information may be in the form of a book, card file, or file folder. These formats afford different kinds of intellectual and social activity.

Then there is the issue of finding a standard nomenclature familiar to all knowledge workers who need the information, despite their different backgrounds. The language can range from graphical representations of decisions, numerical relationships, and textual descriptions in English or other language, to IF-THEN clauses that can be read by machine. A related issue is file naming, the labeling of information prior to or instead of indexing it with a controlled vocabulary; naming may be ad hoc or systematized, as determined by the author or management.

Reversibility, the ability to reverse or negate changes to the information that occur during the KM life cycle, is a chief concern of those wishing to repurpose information. Some changes, such as disposal, are irreversible, because information may be lost in the original translation process, whereas other changes are fully or partially reversible. For example, original data normally can't be reconstructed from summary statistics. Versioning, the ability to track incremental changes to information, such as modifications, is key to allowing reversibility. Translating information from one form to another is usually fully reversible.

Infrastructure

A functional, supportive infrastructure enables the application of information technology to one or more phases of the KM life cycle. Core infrastructure issues include the nature of the supporting computer and communications hardware; the frequency, cost, and regularity of hardware updates; and the information storage capacity of a manual filing facility or computer system. In both physical and computer-based KM