

The most important support mechanisms at the archiving phase of the KM life cycle include a variety of information technologies, from database management systems and controlled vocabularies to expert systems. The longevity of the information in the archive is a function of having a controlled environment, maintenance programs in place, and a librarian to oversee the archiving process. Archiving lends itself to a secure, controlled storage environment that is safe from natural and artificial threats, from fire and flooding to hackers. Similarly, since file formats, operating systems, computer hardware, and even media have a finite life span, maintenance programs that specify periodic conversion to new operating systems and most popular file formats will ensure that the information is accessible in the future.

Transfer

The transfer or communications of information from one person or place to another is a prerequisite for an efficient Knowledge Management system. As illustrated in Exhibit 4.6, the key issues in the transfer phase of the KM life cycle include cost, security, and transfer time. The cost per quantity of information communicated from one point to another may be significant, especially if there isn't an existing networked infrastructure. In addition, the security of information is always an issue, and it is especially critical when the information is being transferred across a public network, such as the Internet or a wireless or telephone network. Transfer time—the time it takes to move information from one point to another in the organization—often defines the usability of a KM system. In most cases, the shorter the transfer time, the more usable the information.

The primary support mechanisms in the transfer phase of the KM life cycle include networks and, in some instances, physical transfer. Corporate intranets, the Internet, and the web are all enabling technologies