

**IN THE REAL WORLD**

## People versus Processors

Dell Computer allows customers to configure PCs with more than 40,000 combinations of hardware and software through its web site. Instead of dealing with an engineer or salesperson, customers interact directly with Dell's web site to compare prices and capabilities of various configurations. Although many customers then turn to the phone to actually place the order, the system saves Dell from having to train sales representatives on the continuous stream of new products and configurations.

The technology approach to Knowledge Management isn't a panacea, however. For example, even though it's a technology company, Hewlett-Packard relies heavily on the organic approach, using human knowledge workers in situations that require on-site, hands-on dissemination of information.

a virtual meeting, they can be held as frequently as necessary, for short periods, with no overhead of walking or traveling to a meeting place.

This chapter explores the many enabling technologies that can be applied to Knowledge Management at both the corporate level and the level of the individual knowledge worker. Before delving into a description of these and other enabling technologies, consider the challenges being addressed at the Custom Gene Factory.

## **Electronic Whiteboard**

Like most other firms, Custom Gene Factory (CGF) is challenged with delivering an economically viable service to its customers in a highly competitive industry while investing heavily in new product development. As a result, the research and development department (R&D) is under pressure to develop new processes and communicate these ideas