

Institutional Expert Directory

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Abstract:

This proposed project involves the creation of a next generation Institutional Expert Directory. In the age of social networking this seems like a 'no-brainer;' but to date, institutions, universities and even some large corporations have failed to overhaul their antiquated on-line directories and enrich them with valuable information about their greatest resource, their human capital. It is well known that by bringing together people with different backgrounds and areas of expertise, one often can design a better mouse trap than could otherwise be created. Human connections within and across organizations are the very lifeblood of great institutions and successful teams. The Expert Directory solution would allow an institution to be transformed from a static list of people with particular department homes to a vibrant community of experts that can readily identify each other, team together and advance their chosen cause.

Detailed Description:

Human capital is the foundation of any great organization or entity. In fact, value is created for institutions by connecting individuals and creating teams in which the sum of the parts is more valuable than individuals on their own. By bringing together people with different backgrounds and areas of expertise, one often can design a better mouse trap than could otherwise be created. Human connections and teams within and across institutions are the very lifeblood of great organizations and winning collaborations; but in large organizations, how does one identify individuals with particular expertise to team with in order to achieve the best outcomes? How does one make available information about their specific areas of expertise to other individuals outside of their group or department whom they do not know? If you want to design a drug that will utilize nano-particles to deliver a particular chemotherapeutic to a pituitary brain tumor, how do you find your institution's expert in nano-particle design, pituitary tumor physiology and biology, chemotherapeutics, clinical trial design, pharmacology, and biostatistics? How does one go about finding experts in other departments within their own organization let alone another? Say you want to team with investigators at another institution; perhaps create a team between Emory and Georgia Tech? Traditionally organizations have put out directories primarily to publish the contact information for employees within various departments. Initially this was in the form of bound paper institutional directories and later this migrated to the internet; but what about expertise? How do I know who has what expertise? Traditional directories, still in use today, have failed to provide this rich and useful information. So how does one find someone with particular content knowledge? Ask around? Do a Google search? At best, this is a 'hit-or-miss' process. Why does it have to be so hard?

This proposed project involves the creation of a next generation Institutional Expert Directory. In the age of social networking this seems like a 'no-brainer;' but why have institutions failed to overhaul their

antiquated on-line directories and supplement them with rich and valuable information about their greatest resource, their human capital? This solution would enable institutions to unlock and fully realize the value of their human capital and bring to bear their best people to solve problems, plan and execute scientific investigations, and prepare world class proposals. Rather than rely on word of mouth, people can create a profile to enhance and supplement their outdated directory listing where they are able to specify their areas of expertise. Specifically they can create key words that they would like to associate with their profile, such that if a person wanted to identify an expert in pituitary tumors, they could enter this in the search engine and identify people that have indicated this is their expertise. The solution would also permit users to create communities of experts that other experts could join. Recent scholarly papers and articles from the lay press with particular key words would post to the community page. A forum for discussions could be added. The possibilities are numerous. The Expert Directory solution would allow an institution to be transformed from a static list of people with particular department homes to a vibrant community of experts that can readily identify each other, team together and advance their chosen cause. Moreover, the more institutions and geographies that participate, the more valuable the community becomes facilitating connections between individuals and institutions worldwide. Anyone that has every tried to put together a winning team for a particular endeavor requiring multidisciplinary expertise has experienced the pain of maneuvering the current antiquated system; and where there is pain, there is a needed solution. The Institutional Expert Directory would provide this needed solution.