Knowledge Management standards

How does one go about developing a standard when the subject matter is rather vague?

This article endeavors to explain, what in the author's mind, is the meaning behind a standard and knowledge management.

What is a standard?

According to some dictionaries, a standard can be defined as:

1. 'Capable of satisfying certain conditions fixed by competent authority'
2. 'That which is established as a rule or model by public opinion, custom or general consent'
3. 'One that is worthy of imitation or duplication'

Therefore a standard can be set by either an authority, a team of people collaborating with one another or established by a role model.

Knowledge Management components

Firstly it is necessary to identify and describe the components that seem to make up knowledge management and the possible relationships that exists between them.

It would appear that there is some confusion as to what knowledge is. Probably the most confusing aspect is trying to describe the difference between information, data and knowledge and the relationships that may exist between them.

What is Information?

Information is a body–collection–objects–subjects of text, pictures, sounds, feelings (both tactile and imaginary) and smell.

Information on its own is chaotic until some order is applied to help make sense of it.

The internet is a very good example of chaos at work. There are millions of sites containing billions of words, pictures, animations, video clips, music and sounds, yet are we really any better off for knowing any site? Or is it only good entertainment?

What is data?

Data is the plural of the word datum. Datum is a single attribute–property–object–subject that helps to prove the existence of a piece of information.

A data item could be a picture of an individual, an amount owing on a credit card or a number of apples purchased.

The picture of an individual could prove the existence of a document called a passport. The passport document would be the information containing the relevant data proving the possible existence of an individual.

It seems senseless to attempt to identify all the data before identifying the knowledge that is important to someone.

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What is Knowledge?

Knowledge is a subset of information, which someone has taken time to gather in order to try to make some sense of the chaos.

Knowledge only becomes useful once someone has sifted through the vast amount of information, distilling only that which is pertinent to their or their organisation's needs. Knowledge removes the 'noise' associated with data and information overload.

What is Knowledge Management?

Knowledge Management is the field that examines how understanding–wisdom–intelligence, whether public or private might be captured, represented, cross referenced, stored and applied for a range of intensive tasks – whether that be decision support, computer assisted learning, research (eg. hypothesis testing) or research support – see http://www.csu.edu.au/research/kmg/.

Knowledge management can therefore set up the standards to develop tools and techniques to administer one of the following aspects:

- The documents containing the knowledge pertinent to the organisation. Their structure, the use of style sheets, word processors, XML, HTML, publishing tools, meta tags, search engines
- The branches of knowledge assisting organisations to focus their attention on their very existence. Identifying the knowledge of the documents et al that will assist an organisation to survive

How Ripose supports Knowledge Management

Ripose is designed to support the second aspect mentioned in the previous section.
That is, Ripose supports knowledge management by:

- Reducing the stress placed on limited resources (people, money, computing power and time) by speeding up the process of identifying, aligning and administering knowledge
- Providing trained Ripose facilitators/architects
- Providing generic models to speed up the process of identifying and recording the tacit knowledge an organisation needs thereby developing its specific objectives and strategies – these in turn lead directly to supporting the solutions and documents mentioned in the first aspect in the previous section
- Providing its Caspar (computer assisted strategic planning and reasoning) engine to manage the complex nature and relationships that exist or could exist between the tacit, explicit and hidden knowledge requirements

About the author

Charles Richter, who developed the Ripose Technique and Caspar engine, has the advantage of over 30 years' experience and training in methodologies, system development and implementation. His knowledge and skills has been gained from extensive industry involvement

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