Knowledge Management in an Age of Social Media

Re-examining conceptual foundations of KM in a new knowledge ecosystem

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Overview

• Social Media (SM)
• Implications of SM for
  – Epistemology & Nature of knowledge
    • E.g.: Pyramid, understanding, object
  – Linear Value Chain
  – Enterprise and Knowledge Based View of the firm
• Findings/Implications/Conclusions
Social Media

• Platforms with open APIs
  ➢ extendable, interoperable
  ➢ manage social connections
  ➢ enable knowledge and content sharing

• Many-2-many *interaction*
  ➢ sharing, collaborating, collective action
  ➢ social construction of meaning
  ➢ always on
Many-2-Many Sharing

% Audience Exposure

Time

- One-2-One (WOM)
- One-2-Many (broadcast)
- Many-2-Many (viral)
Interest Networks

Content & knowledge shared along lines of interest

– Network of networks
– Self-organized
– Self-filtering
Interest Networks & CoP

Repeated Interest Network Use
– Enduring Connections
– Communities of Practice
– Collective Action
Epistemology & Nature of K

Knowledge as:

- Built layers (knowledge pyramid)
- State of Mind (understanding)
- Object (manipulateable)
- Process (applying expertise)
- Access to information (ability to acquire)
- Capability (influence action)
The knowledge pyramid & SM

- SM “Always on”
- Speed and reach of SM
- Input unpredictable
K as State of Mind & SM

• Explicit or tacit
• In individual or collective
• SM
  – bloggers make knowledge explicit
  – collective sense making
  – wiki as dynamic knowledge base
  – wikis and blogs facilitate collective knowledge production
Knowledge as Object & SM

• K as “stock” that can be stored
• SM
  – K is shared and can spread quickly
    • Re-framed
    • Re-mixed
    • Edited
    • Annotated
  – Distributed storage
  – Integrity of knowledge?
Knowledge as Process & SM

• K exists in application of expertise
• Emphasizes the flow of K
  – creation, sharing, distributing of K
• SM
  – collective K production
  – facilitates sharing
  – K distribution
  – external CoPs may benefit firms
K as Access to Information & SM

• Access to information through IT
  – Information will solve a problem

• SM
  – question & answer features
  – weak tie resources
  – enhanced serendipity
  => ideas & innovation
  – miss-information?
Knowledge as Capability & SM

• K influences actions
• KM supports
  – development of core competencies
  – organizational and individual learning
• SM & a torrent of information
  – recognize salient information?
  – leakage of core competencies
Knowledge Value Chain

• K as object, as process, and access to information
  – creation, storage, access, sharing and distribution of K (each stage adds value)

• SM
  – creation influenced by external sources
  – answers “just in time”
  – loss of control
  – emergent value?
The Enterprise and Knowledge Based View of the firm

Firms create, transfer, and apply knowledge for competitive advantage

- K in routines, processes, organizing principles
- firm CoPs: shared practices & mental models, founded on accumulated social capital
The Enterprise and Knowledge Based View of the firm

SM:

– re-think focus on the enterprise level

firms are embedded in a web of social information sources and knowledge assets, not only assets that reside within the firm boundaries
Findings

SM is many-2-many & always on

- actors simultaneously embedded in work / non-work norms & cultures
- support more weak ties
- interest networks form
- knowledge dynamically coproduced & reproduced & distributed
Implications

• Firms embedded in web
  – firm boundaries more porous
  – external critical knowledge
  – K storage requirements (just-in-time K)
  – enhanced serendipity
  – filtering for salient K
  – protecting K assets
Conclusions

• SM creates a complex knowledge ecosystem (KE)
• Firms that learn to leverage the benefits & mitigate uncertainties will enjoy a competitive advantage over firms that don’t
• Firms may need to become social
Discussion / Questions

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