Chapter 6.13
Knowledge Blogs in
Firm Internal Use

Miia Kosonen
Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland

Kaisa Henttonen
Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland

Kirsimarja Blomqvist
Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge sharing in today's distributed organizations is a challenge. Hierarchical structures may not support the fast flow of information or the efficient co-creation of knowledge from specialized and tacit individual knowledge bases (see Grant, 1996; Miles et al., 2000; Adler, 2001). There is therefore a need to devise new patterns for leveraging dispersed knowledge within organizations and across organizational borders. In the following we explore internal company weblogs as a potential new channel for sharing knowledge and expertise.

Knowledge is deeply embedded in social interaction. Recent advances in ICT have led to the production of social software, the primary purpose of which is knowledge sharing (Teigland & Wasko, 2005). One example of this is the emergence of *weblogs* (or *blogs*), personal Web pages that incorporate regular posts in reverse chronological order about a particular topic, current events or personal thoughts and expression (Blanchard, 2004; Herring et al., 2004; Wagner & Bolloju, 2005). Our focus is on internal *knowledge blogs*. A small proportion of blogs could be classified as knowledge blogs, implying the online equivalent of professional journals in which authors *share new knowledge in their professional domains*: they report on their research progress, share references and make observations (Wagner & Bolloju, 2005). However, the application of blogs in knowledge management is a new phenomenon, and firms have been slow to do so. Current research fails to promote understanding of the applicability of blogs in networked teams and organizations, and

of their role in the social processes of knowledge sharing and creation.

Thus we contribute to the emerging literature by exploring the critical factors involved in applying internal company blogs. Most studies have addressed only the rational part of mediated communication, that is, the characteristics of communication technologies and their capacity for managing and transferring information. Our aim in this article is to include the social perspective, and to provide a categorization that combines the rational-social and individual-organizational dimensions. We then report on a mini-case study in order to illustrate the identified factors. We argue that anyone wishing to exploit the potential of knowledge sharing through internal blogs should understand their nature and characteristics in order to be able to make the best possible media choices.

BACKGROUND

Knowledge Blogs

Knowledge blogs are used in internal communication for knowledge-sharing purposes (Zerfass, 2005): to promote a shared understanding of the perspectives of CEOs and employees (Dearstyne, 2005), to coordinate projects and present ideas, and to bridge the gaps between individuals with various views in order to identify new trends in innovation communities (Wagner & Bolloju, 2005). Knowledge sharing, collaboration and best practices are endemic in blogs (Ojala, 2004).

Knowledge blogs appear at the intersection of professional communication and personal reflection. They serve as an ideal medium for experts sharing an interest in a specific topic: they enable storytelling, reflection, the capturing of information, and the sharing thoughts or ideas, thus making individuals' "hidden" processes more visible and promoting both personal and collective learning (Röll, 2004; 2006). Thus, they can offer

business representatives a means for expanding the boundaries of knowledge sharing and creation (Herring et al., 2004). Blogs as a social medium facilitate the sharing of both objectified (codified) and collective knowledge (social/organizational practices and experiences).

Approaches to Computer-Mediated Communication

Theories of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have been categorized as rational or social (see Kock, 2005; Webster & Trevino, 1995). The former rely on the hypothesis of rationality and effectiveness, involving users who select the communication medium of appropriate richness and level of social presence for each task. According to the early theories regarding the effects of CMC, the "richer" the media are (i.e., the more they allow nonverbal cues, provide immediate feedback, and convey personality traits), the better suited they are to human-to-human interaction (Short et al., 1976; Daft & Lengel, 1986).

From a social perspective, alternative approaches concentrating on the applicability of CMC have emerged, including the social-influence model devised by Fulk et al. (1990), social information processing theory as developed by Walther (1996), and Lea and Spears' (1992) theory of social identity and de-individuation (SIDE). According to the social-influence model, the technological features are not inherently decisive in the choice of communication media, but they are influenced by social-group norms and membership (Fulk et al., 1990; Markus, 1994). Walther (1996), in turn, suggests in his theory of social information processing that the "cues-filtered-out" conditions in CMC do not prevent relational communication, although social relationships take a longer time to develop in computer-mediated groups than in face-to-face groups. The SIDE theory concerns processes of social identification and self-categorization, that is, in-group and out-group membership (Lea & Spears, 1992). Attention should be paid to

Related Content

Culture and Technology: A Mutual-Shaping Approach
Thomas Herdin, Wolfgang Hofkirchnerand Ursula Maier-Rabler (2009). *Human Computer Interaction: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1055-1068).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/culture-technology-mutual-shaping-approach/22300

Exploring User Acceptance Determinants of COVID-19-Tracing Apps to Manage the Pandemic
Nicolai Krüger, Alina Behne, Jan Heinrich Beinke, Agnis Stibeand Frank Teuteberg (2022). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 1-27).*
www.irma-international.org/article/exploring-user-acceptance-determinants-of-covid-19-tracing-apps-to-manage-the-pandemic/293197

The Impact of Information and Communication Technology Factors on the User Intention to Participate in the Sharing Economy
Pinghao Ye, Liqiong Liuand Joseph Tan (2022). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 1-24).*
www.irma-international.org/article/the-impact-of-information-and-communication-technology-factors-on-the-user-intention-to-participate-in-the-sharing-economy/299076

End User Support Usage
Robin Munkvold (2003). *Computing Information Technology: The Human Side (pp. 146-160).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/end-user-support-usage/6934

A Learning Framework for Target Detection and Human Face Recognition in Real Time
Jiaxing Huang, Zhengnan Yuanand Xuan Zhou (2019). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (pp. 63-76).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-learning-framework-for-target-detection-and-human-face-recognition-in-real-time/227402