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Panel 1 Aligning Knowledge Management Research and Practice

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PANEL 1

ALIGNING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

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Panelists: **Maryam Alavi,** University of Maryland, U.S.A.
Tom Davenport, Boston University and Andersen Consulting, U.S.A.
David Smith, Director of Research, IBM Institute for Knowledge Management, U.S.A.
Karen Ughetta, Director of Knowledge Management Programs, IBM Software Group, U.S.A.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational knowledge is coming to be seen as a valuable strategic asset by management theorists and practitioners (Drucker 1991; Quinn 1996; Winter 1987; Zack 1999a). Knowledge management has consequently become one of the fastest growing areas of interest to the information systems field. Organizations are being advised that to remain competitive, they must efficiently and effectively create, capture, locate, and share their organization's knowledge and expertise, and have the ability to bring that knowledge to bear on problems and opportunities (Davenport and Prusak 1998). This typically involves the creative application of emerging information technologies (Alavi and Leidner 1999; Zack 1999b). Most IS consulting firms have recently created knowledge management practices, while many large organizations have appointed chief knowledge officers and created knowledge management units.

Although the business case for managing organizational knowledge is becoming widely accepted, few organizations today are fully capable of developing and leveraging critical organizational knowledge to improve their performance. While the extant literature calls for effectively managing knowledge, research regarding *how* to do it or documenting its influence on organizational performance is just now emerging At the same time, knowledge management is being adopted by business organizations at a rapid pace.

The aim of the panel is to take stock of where we are regarding knowledge management and IT with regard to the potential gap between research and practice that may be emerging. With that aim, the panel consists of researchers, practitioners, and directors of applied research institutes who operate at the intersection of research and practice.

The key questions to the panel and the audience will be:

- What are the particular issues facing those who are practicing knowledge management and how well is our research addressing them?

- How do we see our knowledge management research informing practice?

- What gaps may be emerging between research and practice in the field of knowledge management?

- Where should our knowledge management research be directed to provide value to industry?

- What are some examples of successful collaboration producing useful knowledge management research?

- What are some models for research collaboration between academia and industry? How might researchers go about initiating those collaborations?

2. PANEL FORMAT

The panel will take the form of a dynamic and open discussion. The moderator will briefly introduce the panel and the panelists. Panelists will briefly describe their knowledge management practice or research experiences, what they are finding, and where they believe further research should be directed. Each panelist's statement will be followed by a brief period of questions, comments or rebuttals from the moderator and the other panelists. After all panelists have had a chance to speak and respond to the other panelists, the discussion will be opened to include the audience as well. To encourage participation, the moderator will solicit questions from the audience, moderating interaction among members of the audience and the panel. The panelists will attempt, through this interactive discussion and debate, to develop and frame current and future research opportunities in knowledge management.

3. REFERENCES

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