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Panel: Informal Communication Practices in Organisational Knowledge Management

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INFORMAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Panelists:
Robert Davison (Organiser); Doug Vogel; Johan Björkstén; Gerhard Schwabe; Ann-Frances Cameron; Dubravka Čečez-Kecmanović

Panel Description

Knowledge management has seen considerable attention from both industry and academia in recent years, with substantial investments of finance and also reputation. In many contexts, the focus has been on formal, codification-based systems, as well as the corresponding cooperation of those whose knowledge is being tapped. However, there is also evidence to demonstrate that informal communication practices, such as those enabled by social networking applications including instant messengers, blogs and wikis, have great potential for knowledge sharing in organisations.

In this panel, we bring together experts from academia and industry, each of whom has experienced first hand the application of social networking tools in the context of knowledge sharing and management. In this way, the panel fits well within the theme of ECIS 2008 - "Information Systems in an Innovative Knowledge-Based Society". We aim to stimulate a provocative and engaging debate, both between the panelists and with the audience. The debate will include not only experience reports from panelists, but also informed critique and plenty of opportunity for audience involvement. We intend to challenge current received wisdom and seek to inspire innovative directions in knowledge management, informed by our focus on informal communication practices and social networking tools. The approximate time management is indicated below. Each panelist will have five minutes to speak. This will be followed by quick comments from two other panelists (one minute each) and a small window for audience interaction (4 minutes). A longer (19 minutes) period of audience-panel discussion time will close the panel session.

Panel Component	Lapsed Time (mins)
Introduction to the Panel, Panelists and Panel Structure (Robert Davison)	5
Panelist #1: Robert Davison • Social Knowledge Sharing Practices in SMEs in China	10
Quick Comments from two other panelists	12
Audience interaction time	16
Panelist #2: Doug Vogel • Knowledge Sharing between Hong Kong and the Netherlands	21
Quick Comments from two other panelists	23
Audience interaction time	27
Panelist #3: Johan Björkstén • Knowledge Management in Eastwei Relations	32
Quick Comments from two other panelists	34

Audience interaction time	38
Panelist #4: Gerhard Schwabe – Development and Evaluation of Mobile Applications for Knowledge Management	43
Quick Comments from two other panelists	45
Audience interaction time	49
Panelist #5: Ann-Frances Cameron • IM and the Knowledge Management Cycle: Sharing, Storage, and Use	54
Quick Comments from two other panelists	56
Audience interaction time	60
Panelist #6: Dubravka Čečez-Kecmanović • Knowledge Sharing Through IM – Reflections on Field Findings	65
Quick Comments from two other panelists	67
Audience interaction time	71
Moderated interactions between the panel members and the audience	90

Mini-bios and Expertise of the Proposed Panelists

Robert Davison is an Associate Professor of Information Systems at the City University of Hong Kong. His current research focuses on virtual collaboration and knowledge management in China, with a small number of organisation-based projects in progress. Adopting a multi-methodological approach, he incorporates interviews, surveys, ethnography and action research as he investigates the ways in which technology is deployed and at the same time seeks to improve organisational circumstances.

Doug Vogel is a Professor (Chair) of Information Systems at the City University of Hong Kong. He has published widely and directed extensive research on group support systems, knowledge management and technology support for education. His research interests bridge the business and academic communities in addressing questions of the impact of information systems on aspects of interpersonal communication, group problem solving, cooperative learning, and multi-cultural team productivity in knowledge sharing contexts.

Johan Björkstén is the founder and Chairman of Eastwei Relations, China's leading strategic PR agency. Eastwei's media relations approach, Knowledge-Driven Media Relations, has received wide recognition in the Chinese PR industry for its ability to drive great media coverage for clients. Eastwei has grown faster than any other major agency in China, averaging more than 50 percent per year during the last four years. This growth can be attributed to the knowledge-intensive media philosophy as well as the company's open and sharing culture and the early harnessing of new technologies such as IM and other ICT KM systems in day-to-day professional work.

Gerhard Schwabe is a Professor in the Department of Informatics and group leader of the Information Management Research Group at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His group develops innovative solutions in areas of mobile technologies and ambient, collaborative applications for leading institutions in banking, e-government, learning, and tourism. The research focuses on conducting studies and experiments of innovative approaches for information management problems as well as development of prototypes and architectures.

Ann-Frances Cameron is an Assistant Professor of Information Systems at the HEC Montreal. Her research interests include inter- and intra-organizational communication with special focus on the use of virtual teams, new communication technologies, and emerging communication practices. Through a combination of on-site observations and large-scale surveys, she examines these topics and their impacts for organizational workers.

Dubravka Ćećez-Kecmanović is a Professor and Head of School of Information Systems, Technology and Management at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia. She has studied IS-organisation co-emergence from interpretivist and critical theory perspectives. Her recent interests include the sensemaking theory of knowledge in organizations as a foundation for understanding IT implications on informal communication, knowledge sharing and co-creation, communities of practice, and organizational learning.