

▼ Introduction to Knowledge Management for Creativity and Innovation Minitrack

Hind Benbya
GSCM-Montpellier Business School
h.benbya@supco-montpellier.fr

Lynne P. Cooper
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
Lynne.p.cooper@jpl.nasa.gov

Nassim Belbaly
GSCM-Montpellier Business School
n.belbaly@supco-montpellier.fr

1. Introduction

The objective of this minitrack is to explore the potential for Knowledge Management (KM) to enhance creativity and drive innovation. Managing knowledge for creativity and innovation is clearly different from exploiting knowledge for routine work when new procedures are known. Although this is recognized a high priority, and is often cited as a primary reason organizations get involved in KM, the majority of research focuses on knowledge reuse and transfer of best practices, rather than how knowledge is created and applied to derive business value, generate new ideas, and develop new products and solutions.

In recent workshops addressing KM, scholars and practitioners have identified the need for further research on: *How knowledge is developed and transformed into business value? And how KM/KMS contribute to creativity and innovation both at the individual and organizational level?* This need is also recognized as the number one priority of leading organizations. The CEO's of General Electric and Proctor & Gamble for instance have made creativity and innovation predominate corporate priorities.

2. Summary of Articles

In line with this challenging research issue, this mini track presents six papers in two sessions.

Session I – Conceptual Models and Frameworks

This first session juxtaposes three conceptual studies presenting widely varying frameworks for tools, systems, and environments to support work across different levels of innovation and creativity. The first paper by Gasson presents a framework to support the cooperative design of business and IT systems. This framework specifically addresses the issues that arise when the business goals (and therefore system goals) are not clearly defined in advance and emerge through a creative development process. In our second paper, Jenkin relates desired tool characteristics to different modes of web-enabled learning using a mental model paradigm. The

resulting framework distinguishes three levels of tools based on their applicability to maintaining, tuning, or building mental models. The third paper by Lubliner and Widmeyer explores the potential for applying a Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) framework to multiple interconnected courses to facilitate collaborative learning. This innovative paper presents a path toward capitalizing on the success of MMOGs in the entertainment arena to support education.

Session II – Empirical Research on Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Our second session highlights three empirical studies investigating multiple aspects of knowledge management support for creativity and innovation.

The first paper by Piirainen, Kivijärvi, and Tuominen investigates knowledge conversion in the context of developing scenarios. Through a multi-case study, they show that the contextual richness of scenario development enables knowledge sharing and conversion to a form that contributes to organizational decision making. In the second paper, Vaccaro, Veloso, and Brusoni investigated the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) on knowledge creation. They evaluated activities on two R&D teams and found evidence that ICTs can contribute to the transfer and creation of new knowledge at both the explicit and implicit levels. Our final paper, by Benbya and Van Alstyne suggests a knowledge market perspective to elicit new contributions and identify high quality content in the context of KMS. Two case studies are used to devise initial steps for bringing knowledge markets inside the boundaries of a firm and for sustaining their effectiveness over time.

We would like to thank all of our colleagues whose efforts contributed to the inaugural presentation of this minitrack. We are grateful to both those who submitted work and to our hard-working reviewers.