Introduction to the Minitrack on Knowledge Flows: Knowledge Transfer, Sharing and Exchange In Organizations

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1. Introduction
This minitrack examines the nature and role of knowledge flows (e.g., knowledge transfer, sharing and exchange) in the organizational context. The Call for Papers welcomed theoretical and empirical pieces addressing technical, managerial, behavioral, organizational, and economic perspectives on knowledge flows.

2. Summary of Articles
Twelve papers are presented in four sessions as a part of this mini-track. We introduce them briefly below.

Session I - Knowledge Transfer and Sharing
In this session, the first paper by Joshi and Sarker examines the impact of absorptive capacity, motivation, communication, group cohesion, and group culture on knowledge transfer within the ISD context. In second paper, Brown, Dennis, and Grant examine how the nature of knowledge impacts the value of person-to-person knowledge sharing. Specifically, they examine the impact of three dimensions of knowledge (teachability, observability, complexity) and the presence of codified knowledge in a KMS on person-to-person knowledge sharing. In the final paper, Han and Anantatmula examine cultural, technological, motivational, and organizational factors, which influence knowledge sharing within an organization from a non-executive employee’s perspective.

Session II - Knowledge Flow through Communities
In this session, the first paper by Hara and Hew examines the participation of nurses in an online listserv, and attempts to understand the extent to which this listserv constitutes a community of practice (COP). In the second paper, Cadiz, Griffith, and Sawyer develop a model of knowledge transfer in a COP. Specifically, they investigate the role of shared vocabulary, learning from each other, open communication, and remembering prior lessons on knowledge sharing, using data from a fortune 500 company. The final paper in this session by O’Calaghan and Andreu addresses the challenges associated with the dynamics of knowledge in clusters and regional networks.

Session III - Design, Development and Usage of Knowledge Flow Systems
In this session, the first paper by Wideroos and Pekkola, chart the demands the unstructured and discontinuous nature of work puts on the management of desktop working context and presents an abstract model for designing a context-aware application. In the second paper, Kuusisto presents a theoretically motivated framework and an empirically validated method to study information flows in decision-making processes. The third paper by Hasty, Massey, and Brown explore the relationship between the knowledge transfer process, role-based experiences and media perceptions in a multiple media environment.

Session IV - Organizational Knowledge Flows and Learning
In this session, the first paper by Choudrie and Selamat describes inter-relations between meta-abilities, tacit knowledge externalization, and organizational learning. The second paper by Newell and Galliers explores the use of both social and technical systems for “short-circuiting” the learning cycle in organizations. The third paper by Somerville et al. reports action research that heightens information exchange and knowledge flow among librarians and with faculty and student constituencies.

3. Publication Opportunities
The minitrack papers published in this part of the proceedings will be considered further for adaptation into journal-length and –quality articles. Two relatively new knowledge management journals have expressed interest: Knowledge Management Research & Practice [1] and the International Journal of Knowledge Management [2].

4. References