Transcending Information Communities

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Knowledge Management for Information Communities
Information communities are good?
Knowledge management FOR communities?
Knowledge management for individuals
Rethink the framework of knowledge management
Knowledge management should transcend communities

Transcending Information Communities

How Philosophers Think

* Concepts, categories, meanings of words
* Two styles of philosophy
  * Analytic (logic, reason, structure of arguments)
  * Interpretive (meanings)
    * hermeneutian
    * Heideggerian phenomenologist
    * hermeneutic circle

Terms and Definitions

Knowledge Management
Knowledge/information distinction
Management
Knowledge (institutional)
Knowing (knowers)
Information

Understanding

* Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)
* The core of humanity
* Not mental processing (no mind)
* Openness to experience
* The there
The There
- Empty space, nothing
- Pure human potential
- Filled with the world
- The world makes us (the there) meaning-full
- Understanding is taking in the meaning of the world

Understanding
- World has its own significance
- We do not make meaning
- We don’t have to process experience
- What we experience, we understand and vice versa
- Understanding is immediate

Minding (Steven Pinker)
- The mind is not a thing to be named by a noun
- “Mind is what the brain does”
- The brain minds
- “Mind” is a process, a verb
- Mind is what people do
- We mind by understanding

Minding (Steven Pinker)
- Specialised, distributed modular systems
- Patterns of data, relations of logic
- Cheat sheets, test patterns, templates, programs
- Brain wiring schematics and evolutionary learning
- Historical patterns of brain activity and neuronal connections

Individuating the Brain
- Different patterns and connections yield different experiences
- “Minute differences in the details of the connections can cause similar-looking brain patches to implement very different programs.”

Holistic Understanding
- Meaning: all things in the world that have been experienced, linked together by their relations to each other
- Relations are the source of meaning
- Not all things and relations are apparent at the same time
- The matrix of meaning determines and is determined by experience
Getting Personal

- Each person projects a unique there
- Projection produces self-consciousness
- Mood influences the there we project
- Mood influences how I understand myself

Mood

- Affects experiences
- Determines openness
- Mood affects understanding
- Accounts for
  - human difference and similarity
  - creativity and community
  - leaders and followers
  - knowledge/knowing distinction
- We can choose our mood

Mood and Experience/meaning
Mood and Experience/Meaning

- Acts as a there
- Shapes the there of individuals
- Creates efficient, productive communities
- Facilitates like-minded communication
- Usurps mood choice
- Encourages laziness about choosing
- Undermines human uniqueness
- Encourages conformity

Knowledge Management

Communities (Jean-Luc Nancy)

- Communities diminish members
  - giving up unique identity
  - adopting community identity
- “Communal fusion contains no other logic than the suicide of the community that governs it.”

Relating to Others

- Best: direct their attention to possibilities
- Worst: take away their possibilities
  - doing for them
  - encouraging conformity
- Communities encourage conformity
- Communities extinguish unique identity

Community Identity

- “[Community] is made up principally of the sharing, diffusion or impregnation of an identity by a plurality wherein each member identifies himself only through the supplementary mediation of his identification with the living body of the community.” (Nancy)
Community Identity

- Professional Paradigm Identity
  - I am what I do
- Information Community Identity
  - I am what I know
- Information is identity
- Information has ontological power

Communication

- Conventional View
  - Similarity, consensus, agreement, sharing
  - A hallmark of community
- Nancy-Heidegger View
  - The acknowledgment of difference
  - "[Communication] is letting someone see with us what we have pointed out by way of giving it a definite character. Letting someone see with us shares with the other that entity which has been pointed out...That which is "shared" is our being towards what has been pointed out -- a being in which we see it in common."

Communication

- "Communication is not a bond...It consists in the appearance of the between as such: you and I (between us) a formula in which the and does not imply juxtaposition, but exposition...Only in this communication are singular beings given without a bond and without communion, equally distant from any notion of connection or joining from the outside and from any notion of a common and fusional interiority." (Nancy)

Knowledge

- Knowledge is the common ground that supports, through consensus, the mutual interests of people who identify with a professional or enterprise paradigm and draw their meanings from it.
- Knowledge management should
  - space us rather than bind us
  - disperse information communities
  - shatter communities into individuals
  - diminish the communal effect of knowledge

What's Required

- Reconceptualise knowledge to include personal understanding and experience
- Recognise the undesirability and impossibility of managing knowledge
- Facilitate emergence and engagement with all knowledge

Knowledge Management Principles

- Show relations to people without imposing a there
- Enrich possibilities and foreground our capacity for fresh, unique understanding
- Shift technology focus from know-what to know-why
- Encourage care-why
- Expand individuals' there
  - provide access to experiences of others
  - make possible new understanding
  - value diverse understanding
Knowledge Management Principles

- Less concern with atoms of information
- More concern with
  - the systemic relations between atoms
  - the distributed and multi-functional nature of those relations
  - the capacity of the unstable unity of those relations to change the meaning of experience

The Deconstructive End!

- The conventional notion of knowledge has disappeared
- The possibility of managing knowledge has disappeared
- The desirability of information communities has disappeared

REFLECT!