Lecture outline

What is the unit about
- Knowledge has become the key resource for modern organisation’s competitive advantage
- It is a vital for increasing productivity and performance capacity
- Information and communication technologies (ICT) offer a lot of opportunities for supporting knowledge workers in complex decision making situations
- The unit will explore the boundaries of these opportunities, identify challenges and provide links to some approaches to overcome them

How are we going to teach
- **Staff**
  - **Lecturers**
    - Frada Burstein (Unit Leader)
    - Henry Linger
  - **Tutors**
    - Clyde Cook
    - Stan Agombar
    - Nirlep Khaira
  - **Teaching Assistant**
    - Clyde Cook (DE students’ support)

How are you going to learn
- **Lectures** – two hours every week
- **Tutorials** – one hour before the lecture
- On-line discussion – 24/7
- Two practical assignments and a class test
  - Research Paper – 20%
  - Case study – 30%
  - Participation – 10%
  - Class test – 40%
- **Recommended Reading**
  - Material from the subject website;

What are we going to study
- We will build foundation for good understanding how individuals and organisations generate, use and re-use intellectual resources
- We will look at the role ICT as a mechanism to support knowledge work
- You will have an opportunity to explore current approaches to knowledge management in the context of a variety of case studies.
Questions?

- If you have a question and do not ask it, it will stay unanswered
- Try finding answers by reading books and other resources
- Use email as your primary way of communication
- Discussion database is a good way of sharing your ideas and generating new knowledge
- Attend tutorials and
- Check consultation time with your tutors and lecturers
- Always make an appointment (ring or email) before dropping in

Understanding Knowledge Management
Session 1

Why is it important to manage knowledge?

Why is Knowledge Important?

- We live in ‘Knowledge Era’
- Progressive change of emphasis from ‘data’ to ‘information’ to ‘knowledge’
- Knowledge has become the primary organizational resource
- ‘In a post-industrial world, the only thing that counts in terms of whether you survive is not milk, it’s not butter, it’s not fruit, it’s not oil, it’s ideas’
  Frank Crowther, cited in Rylatt, 2003
- Knowledge production is expected in addition to the production of physical goods
- “Knowledge production” requires specific conditions to succeed

Knowing your business:

- ‘In the Post-Capitalism, Power comes from transmitting information to make it productive’
  P. Drucker
- Best practice and competences need to be retained and managed

What is Knowledge Management

- Emerging, trans-disciplinary field aiming at:
  - “… doing what is needed to get the most out of knowledge resources”
  Becerra-Fernandez et al, 2004
Knowledge management (KM)

- The systematic process of finding, selecting, organising, distilling and presenting information in a way that improves and employee's comprehension in a specific area of interest.
  - http://www.bus.utexas.edu/kman/anwers.htm
- KM builds on good understanding of strategic value of managing information and knowledge sourcing

Knowledge Management

- “accessing, evaluating, managing, organizing, filtering, and distributing information in a manner that is useful to end users ... knowledge management involves blending a company's internal and external information and turning it into actionable knowledge via a technology platform”
  - DiMattia, Susan and Oder, Norman (1997)

Knowledge Management

- ...a concept which identifies the tacit knowledge of the members of an organisation as among its most important assets. Through appropriate human resource policies and practices, it seeks to achieve a translation from tacit to explicit knowledge which can be shared among members of the organisation

Knowledge Management (Monash SIMS Definition)

- Knowledge Management is a broad concept that address the full range of processes by which the organisation deploys knowledge.
- These involve the acquisition, distribution and use of knowledge in the organisation.

The KM-Domain

- Common Goals and Integration
- Coordination, Management & Controlling
  - Technology
  - Organization
  - Human Resources
- Content Knowledge Markets, Education etc.

Aims of Knowledge Management

- Knowledge management helps an organisation to gain insight an understanding from its own experience.
- Specific knowledge management activities help focus organisation on acquiring, storing and utilising knowledge for such things as problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planing and decision making.
Why KM and why now?

- In the modern complex business environment, organisations ‘need to know’ and ‘make sense’ of a rapidly changing world.
- Business environment constantly changes in terms of where, what, and when and with whom business is done.
- Organisations rely on their knowledge to capitalise on their success.
- High competition environment
  - Innovation and competencies need to be retained and managed.

Why KM and Why Now?

- In the current turbulent and complex business environment, organizations “need to know” and “make sense” of a changing world.
- Four factors affect and change how, where, what, and when business is done and with whom.
- The drivers are:
  - extended geography (globalisation)
  - an alternate temporal paradigm (7/24)
  - Fluid and dynamic business relations
  - Greater accessibility to high level technologies

Importance of knowledge to achieving business goals

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<th>Source: S.Zyngier, KM Survey in Australian corporate environment</th>
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Examples of KM Initiatives

- best practice replication
- change management strategies
- utilisation of decision support system tools
- recognition of explicit and tacit knowledge within the organisation,
- cross departmental or horizontal teams and working groups
- development of an Intranet
- development of a ‘virtual tea room’
- development of an organisational ‘Yellow Pages’
- the promotion of innovation

The Character of a Modern Organisation

- Business is now characterised by:
  - a uniformity in undifferentiated products/services
  - highly diversified products/services that differentiate business initiatives
  - a radically reduced time to market and time in market
  - initiatives resulting from ever changing and growing networks of alliances and partnerships
Changing Work Practices:
- Work practices have changed from structured operation to knowledge work.
- To create value through knowledge requires work:
  - to be performed collaboratively
  - to have a task/activity focus
  - to integrate “doing” and “planning”

Knowledge work:
- Modern organisations engaged in knowledge work.
- This means that the focus is on work practices that require expertise and knowledge to be applied and used to perform activities.
- These activities need to produce tangible outcomes as well as contributing to the creation of knowledge.
- Such work practices combine productive and cognitive work. In this proposal we term such activity knowledge work.

Knowledge management system:
- Knowledge management system (KMS) is a computer-based system that has defined technological characteristics and capabilities to support organisational knowledge acquisition, storage, distribution and application.
- KMS comprises of a technological infrastructure that and has defined structural and functional elements that facilitate knowledge creation from the available information.

Knowledge management system: decision-support approach:
- KM systems facilitates creation and retention of organisational knowledge.
- Intelligent decision support provides necessary functionality of learning, reasoning, memory and explanation to the knowledge management system.

A Guiding Principle:
- Knowledge - (the knowledge of something) is the ability to form a mental model that accurately represents the thing as well as the actions that can be performed on it and by it.

*Sowa, 1994*