

A Comparative Study: Corporate Information Portals and Corporate Knowledge Portals

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Corporate Web Portals

- A form of web technology; also known as portal technology
- The use of websites through a main window entry point
- Leads to a central collection of information resources and services for use by their targeted portal user communities.
- A portal is also known as a corporate portal for business and work purposes (Business/enterprise/corporate portals)
- “Corporate information portals” or “Corporate knowledge portals”?

Research Objectives

- Explore the web portal information resources and services provided in an organization in relation to the information and knowledge contents
- Explore the nature of corporate portal contents in real-life in regards to adoption and use of information and/or knowledge
- Examine whether knowledge management practice is related to the creation, implementation and use of a knowledge portal

Different Definitions of Portals

Definition	Scholars
A web portal, or simply portal, has been commonly defined as a web site that provides well-organized information resources within a common domain	(Lim et al., 2002).
The word portal is often used for web sites that function as an entry to a repository of information on almost any topic on the Internet	(Glander-Hobel, 2002).
Portal technology appears to be a one-stop solution to the information problem created by the World Wide Web because the driving idea behind it is the newspaper stand, to state it metaphorically	(Kotorov & Hsu, 2001)
A portal is a website or other service providing an initial point of entry to the web. Portals typically offer a broad array of resources or services such as e-mail, on-line shopping, discussion forums, and tools for locating information	(Laudon & Laudon, 2000)

Central Theme in the Definitions

“Portals are **a single stop window** over the web page that provides **a collection of information resources and services** for a **specific targeted audience**”.

Knowledge Management

Definition of knowledge management	Scholar
Knowledge management deals with creating, securing, capturing, coordinating, combining, retrieving, and distributing <i>knowledge</i> .	Liebowitz, 2000
Knowledge management is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to the creation, capture, organization, access and use of an enterprise's <i>intellectual capital</i> on customers, markets, products, services and internal processes.	Abell, 2001
Knowledge management directs acquiring, storing, adding value to and deploying the <i>intellectual capital</i> of the firm's professionals.	Ezingear, 2000
Knowledge management (KM) refers to the methods and tools for capturing, storing, organizing, and making accessible <i>knowledge and expertise</i> within and across communities	Mack, Ravin, & Byrd, 2001

Intellectual Exchange & Collaboration in Portals

Extractions from Literature	Authors
WebSphere portal include a feature of advanced collaboration support for e-meetings, application sharing and white-boarding.	IBM Corporation, 2000
Portal integrate diverse interaction channel at a central point , providing a comprehensive context and an aggregated views across all information	Wege, 2002
We are moving into a knowledge age in which the Internet facilitates the reach and speed of communications . We can send email or transmit web pages and documents anywhere in the world cheaply and in a fraction of a second.	Denning, 2002
Exchange of information in literal communities of enterprise portals.	White, 2000
Portals support intra and inter-enterprise collaboration . The mission of any portal initiative is ultimately to build a personalized electronic environment to support business interactions .	The Delphi Group, 2001, 2002
Mailing lists, list servers, newsgroup, chat, and bulletin boards are increasingly being brought together in commercial course management systems for use in on-line web-based instruction	McGrath, 2001

Propositions

- An **information portal** is where the **explicit knowledge of know-what, know-how and know-why** *is*.
- However, when this knowledge of know-what, know-how and know-why, **should ever be insufficient to support current usage and need clarification and update**, it needs **a knowledge portal** to engage an expert or more to clarify the grey area of knowledge
- A **knowledge portal** plays an important role in keeping every bit of **explicit knowledge updated**

Case Studies - First Phase of Exploration

- Fourteen established organizations were chosen for interviews and surveys
- Substantial portal/website business experience in the Internet computing industry
- Thirty-one subjects
- Portal project managers, portal specialists, corporate website designers, website developers, web computing project leaders, corporate systems developers or the like
- Interviews and surveys mainly took a structured format

#	Portal Element	Analysis
1	Information dissemination or communication facilitated (any channel e.g. web publishing, message board, chat-room, email, etc)	Portals disseminate information . For more instant interactions, the communicate channels in portals will grow in future.
2	Creation of business intelligence or competitive advantage	Portals should have the right information captured and contained. That will then provide users with value information of business intelligence .
3	Focus on central knowledge repository	A portal platform has a potential for knowledge to be managed .
4	Support decision making	Critical and useful information/ knowledge should be captured in a portal. With the right person (given authorized usage) retrieving the right information can help making the right decision at the right time .
5	Business legacy applications & database (e.g. portlet, web form)	Although legacy software can be used stand alone, corporation should be aware that software application can be web enabled on the portals.
6	Emphasis on business operations	If integrating business interests and contents in a portal create revenue it is worthwhile to include them in portals.
7	Facilitate user's business work processes	Portals should carefully capture the right information contents and allow the right activities to take place .

Case Studies - Second Phase of Exploration

- **Organization A**

- One of the 14 organizations in the first phase of field work
- Willingness to further participate in this research
- Education industry

- **Organization B**

- Not in the first phase of field work
- Approve/support the investigations of their CP in details
- Government department

#	Portal Element	Organization A	Organization B
1	Information dissemination & Communication facilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work-related information for use ✓ Chat-room and discussion board for web-based teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Show all the recent important news announcements ✓ Use the bulletin board and list servers for information exchange on more specific subject issues
2	Business intelligence	? There was no indication of the need to create business intelligence	✓ Create a knowledge base by capturing knowledge beneficial to the organization for long-term use
3	Central knowledge repository	? No clear explanation on what type of knowledge-related information was captured or stored for future use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The forums are regarded as knowledge bases ✓ A repository of explicit knowledge was indirectly created by tapping in internally and externally useful resources
4	Decision making	✓ A lot of work-related information helps the staff members make work-related decisions	✓ Staff make work-related decisions using the databases on legacy application systems, internal information resources and links to external resources
5	Business legacy applications & database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use CP for related work through the type of information system, system application and database ✓ E.g. on-line enrolment, payslip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work processes are linked to the different legacy application systems. ✓ Staff members obtain the required data, documents, files about their work from the central database
6	Business operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tasks performed contributed to operational work essential to business viability ? Not all business operational procedures were put on the web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Retain knowledge of workers. Existing workers use information/knowledge available on systems to achieve better work performance ✓ Capture the changes in legal issues, socio-economic situations, geographic matters, and etc related to the business operations
7	Business work processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contains usable business information for all work purposes ✓ Perform specific work task 	✓ Provided staff members with the information required to carry out their daily work activities

Key Elements in Corporate Knowledge Portals

- Delivers, stores, and retrieves explicit knowledge as web information dissemination.
- Four knowledge conversion modes to take place; maintains knowledge currency in a central store.
- Knowledge store: new ideas added, obsolete ideas discarded & existing knowledge updated/renewed. Knowledge used for informed decisions and work tasks.
- Knowledge workers, experts or specialists "tapped" within a specific domain knowledge area achieving certain common goals.
- Are all the above points obvious in a portal?
- Organization A - a corporate information portal; Organization B - a corporate knowledge portal.

Corporate Knowledge Portals Policies

1. Clear business mission using corporate portals
2. User loyalty to the organization and instil a sense of belonging
3. Knowledge workers collaboratively share and use knowledge for work
4. Honestly report work, share workload, and foster a trusting work relationship
5. Respect each individual as a knowledge worker in his/her knowledge field
6. Understand the importance that sharing of knowledge in work
7. Encourage consultative discussions amongst staff members
8. Help define the desired parameters of the community
9. Dissent will have to be resolved regarding a particular staff duty or responsibility.

Conclusion & Future Work

- Knowledge management is important to the creation, implementation and use of a knowledge portal
- Creates awareness on the distinction between information portals and knowledge portals
- Useful food for thought to think of the important practices to manage information or explicit knowledge using web technology
- Not a distinction point of information management and knowledge management
- More cases in various fields to determine in which particular situation, an information or a knowledge portal is adequate



Questions?