This special issue originated from the Practical Aspects of Knowledge Management 2010 Conference. From fifty-one submissions, seven articles from seven different countries are in this issue.

In consequence to the wealthy etymology of the word “knowledge”, knowledge management (KM) is equally rich in variety of aspects. Some aspects directly consider humans as users of knowledge, whereas others focus on knowledge as an asset or process. The contributed articles in this special issue practice KM in different ways.

Assessing Knowledge Management Needs: A Strategic Approach to Developing Knowledge. The view of this paper is that knowledge is an object that has a certain value, and that this value is consistent within industry segments, allowing measurement of KM performance and assessment of strategic needs. They show how different financial performance measures can be used as indicators of KM practice levels. Financial performance measures can reveal levels of knowledge assets, and they correspond to better financial performance. Different financial performance measures consistently group high-performance KM firms and low-performance KM firms. Their studies suggest that superior KM performance is associated with competitive advantage and better financial performance despite the industry or service segment.

Learning a Lightweight Ontology for Semantic Retrieval in Patient-Centered Information Systems. This paper focuses on humans as users of knowledge as a means of behavioral change. Nevertheless, in order to achieve such a challenging goal, its authors had to manage knowledge resources in order to enhance their representation to make them more easily accessible to human users. Technically, they used input texts to learn associative networks in support of semantic retrieval.

KM Approach for Improving the Labor Productivity of Vietnamese Enterprise. In this paper the view of knowledge is that of an object that can be changed and improved. The goal is to understand the
effectiveness of KM on labor productivity in developing countries like Vietnam. With this purpose, a new model is derived from adapting an existing general approach. The latter one includes learning, communication and culture capability. The evaluation of these capabilities is based on questionnaires that collected data from various companies in Vietnam. Among other things, they were able to determine that, in Vietnamese organizations, knowledge management activities determine the satisfaction of their employees; and that technology capability and employee satisfaction positively affect the labor productivity of an organization.

Using Grounded Theory to Acquire Knowledge about Critical Success Factors for Conducting Software Process Improvement Implementation Initiatives. In this paper knowledge is a process. Its special emphasis is on knowledge acquisition for supporting Software Process Improvement (SPI), which is a dynamic process. The goal is to find critical success factors based on the individual experiences of SPI consultants. The paper describes the use of Grounded Theory as a method for knowledge elicitation, understanding, representation, and maintenance. The method orients how to capture declarative knowledge and how to create structural knowledge by identifying a set of inter-related categories, and procedural knowledge via propositions.

Managing Professions for Knowledge Management. In this paper, knowledge is an asset possessed by humans. Consequently, knowledge can be managed through human resource management (HRM) in such a way that a proper management of human resources will influence KM results. The paper surveys companies analyzing KM roles and tasks, investigating the challenges posed to HRM by the emerging KM-related activities. The recent literature and the empirical evidence are surveyed with the aim to underline important issues relating to the nature and the contents of new professions, staffing policy, performance appraisal, and rewards system. This work provides interesting insights with respect to new roles and profiles, formalization and evaluation of KM activities, as well as guidelines for better KM.

Merging Controlled Vocabularies for More Efficient Subject-Based IR Systems. This paper interprets knowledge as something to be understood, which can be found within a document and through a set of contextualized words. It proposes a methodology to reuse traditional cataloguing methods and merge it with a modern thesaurus to create a tool that is more amenable to user search. The proposed method can be reused to create a common structure from other controlled vocabularies. It utilizes SKOS (Simple Knowledge Organization System) ontologies, which for being semantically rich, provide a more comprehensive subject-based browsing experience to end-users.

Community-based Development of Knowledge Products. This paper focuses on humans as the users of knowledge, particularly ones who can benefit from receiving knowledge that can improve their livelihood. This article presents a real world example of why and how to tailor knowledge artifacts to effectively reach their target audience. It illustrates that absorption can be a function of multiple cultural aspects like language and context.