Preface

“All human situations have their inconveniences. We feel those of the present but neither see nor feel those of the future; and, hence we often make troublesome changes without amendment, and frequently for the worse.” -- Benjamin Franklin

The editor at some extent agrees with Benjamin Franklin quotation, because hitherto mainstream literature has been neglecting the ethical and social dilemmas that knowledge management enables. Nonetheless, if this handbook aims to alter the knowledge society status quo (mental and cultural revolution) through theoretical and practical solutions, it is reasonable to expect that these amendments will encourage a better society.

ABOUT THE SUBJECT

The philosophical dialogue as regards to “knowledge” is divided into four constructs:

“episteme (knowledge about common and collective agreements, hereby episteme means a concrete knowledge about something, which can be easily passed to the next generation), techne (ability or practical capacity, knowledge about how to handle tasks and exercises), phronesis (intuitive knowledge like wisdom, which is combined with personal experiences and with a specific social attitude, which cannot be easily passed to other people), métiers (knowledge, which is based on personal experiences and social practises; it means a specific type of cleverness and individual brilliancy, developed by a person in a specific context; obviously métiers also cannot be easily passed to other persons)” (Renzl 2004, p. 32).

This quotation emphasizes the process of creating, using and sharing knowledge despite the underlying level of knowledge management, which may vary according to literature. For example, Sinclair (2008) refers three levels: personally-based, community-based, and organizationally based.

Higgison (2005) describes personal knowledge management as the process of managing and supporting the knowledge that is significant and valuable to an individual through preserving its social networks. Community-based knowledge acknowledges the multiple configurations (communities of practices, virtual communities, etc) that technology supports in order to create, use and share knowledge (Sinclair, 2008). And, for instance Brelade & Harman (2003) argue that organizational knowledge management enables the acquisition and exploration of resources to generate an environment in which information is available to all organizational members. This environmental characteristic will allow individuals to
acquire, share and use that information to develop their personal knowledge, as well as persuades them to apply their knowledge for the benefit of the organization.

Even so, the editor proposes another conception: personal, organizationally, and society-based. The disparity resumes two arguments:

- a perception of what is considered an organization, because the editor assumes community as a form of organizational taxonomy (broader perception);
- and, states possess their own knowledge management strategies (societal approach). For Wiig (2006), societal knowledge management entails the knowledge-related initiatives within a society, which is achieved through a blend of proactive and voluntary actions managed by personal and local contexts and public knowledge infrastructures.

Regardless the theoretical configuration, the relationship among these levels as well as the knowledge construct, induces ethical and social tensions never glimpsed before (the scope of Ethical Issues and Social Dilemmas in Knowledge Management: Organizational Innovation). Besides, these ethical and social dilemmas clearly reflect the need to rethink knowledge society fundamentals, or otherwise the positive and desirable legacy for future generations will be a mirage. If, the impact of knowledge society is economic, cultural, social, political and technological with intergenerational consequences, a multidimensional analysis is compulsory in order to promote a reliable and feasible discussion.

WHY THIS PUBLICATION

The underlying motivations for this handbook are the editor academic, professional and publishing background which IGI Global has recognized. From the array of these experiences, the editor has gain conscience that humans have a natural curiosity for understanding their world, which highlights dissimilar queries or means. On the other hand, it is also typical to query about the existing reality and until what extent we believe in the principles that guide mankind actions. In conclusion, this handbook attempts to demonstrate that knowledge management needs to change “its course”, which is proven through brilliant theoretical and empirical contributions, as well it resumes the human reasoning: more we know, more we wonder about the right questions.

MISSION AND AIMS

The mission of this handbook is to provide an inclusive coverage of the latest and most relevant developments, solutions and problems related to this topic that has been systemically neglected by literature and given its overall impact in knowledge society and organizational knowledge management projects.

Thus, some significant objectives of this handbook embrace:

- to demonstrate the philosophical underpinnings concerning knowledge management, and the importance of ethics;
- to reveal the multiple facets of knowledge management;
- to illustrate the ethical and social dilemmas that occur in societal knowledge management;
• to exhibit the ethical and social dilemmas that arise in organizational knowledge management;
• to relate organizational innovation with these dilemmas;
• to introduce solutions that allow to minimize the ethical and social dilemmas;
• to promote a change for a truthful knowledge society (based on ethical and moral principles).

In conclusion, the resulting publication enables a valuable, challenging and multidisciplinary resource for Readers acquire excellent insights pertaining to the transformations and challenges that knowledge management is and will face.

ORGANIZATION

This handbook resumes a compilation of 15 contributions that discuss numerous dimensions: Knowledge Management- schools of thought and dimensions; “Societal” Knowledge Management- ethical and social dilemmas; “Organizational” Knowledge Management- ethical and social dilemmas; Organizational Innovation- dilemmas; and Trends. Hence, these chapters are written by 21 authors (20 authors and the editor), namely academic and practitioners related to the multiple dimensions that the handbook core enables: ICT experts, lawyers, ethicists, consultants, among others.

Ethical Issues and Social Dilemmas in Knowledge Management: Organizational Innovation is organized in five sections:

• **Section 1**: Knowledge Management, discusses the schools of thoughts and the contribution of moral psychology (critical dimension) to knowledge management;
• **Section 2**: “Societal Knowledge Management”, acknowledges a macro perception of knowledge management and its ethical and social dilemmas;
• **Section 3**: “Organizational Knowledge Management”, enables a meso perspective of these dilemmas within knowledge environments, namely within educational settings;
• **Section 4**: “Organizational Innovation”, resumes a blend between organizational knowledge management and trends in order to the Reader understand the continuum process and bound between both realities;
• **Section 5**: Trends, debates practical solutions concerning the ethical and social dilemmas previously illustrated.

Nevertheless, at this point some additional remarks are mandatory: the handbook acknowledges the overlapping realities among the three levels and knowledge construct, as well as it might seems to assume a top-down analysis that disregards personal knowledge management (due to its sections, namely from section 2 to 5). Although, the personal dimension can be easily recognized within societal and organizational knowledge management, and section 1 is a “milestone” for what to expect (a non-traditional approach to knowledge management).

As a result, the following step is to articulate the aims and objectives of each section versus its content (chapters), and a graphical representation of the handbook’s architecture. Section 1 includes 2 chapters, as well as it enables propaedeutic instructions about the philosophical underpinnings of knowledge management as a research field, as well as it introduces the contribution of moral psychology.
Kiyoshi Murata debates the SECI model, Japanese input to knowledge management, encompassing a double analysis: the explanation of the theoretical contribution of Nonaka and his colleagues given their importance to the research field; and, the socio-cultural background that pervades it. Chapter 1 investigates the bond between the Japanese school of knowledge management and, the socio-cultural systems of Japan. In addition, the Japanese socio-cultural features of uchi/soto awareness, insular collectivism and the hon’ne/tatemae tradition can disrupt an organisation’s ba (sense of place and structure), leading to several social dilemmas, most importantly a degradation of trust.

Chapter 2 embraces the contribution of moral psychology to knowledge management, enabling the need to rethink the nature of ethical action by computer professionals given the importance of knowledge management systems in supporting knowledge creation, sharing and use. Chuck Huff introduces a research program that has tracked ethical action among computer professionals and uses the insights from that research to make suggestions. In that sense, the author has concluded that an ethical actor is not a passive recipient of a pre-packaged decision space, but shapes his or her decision according to the situation and goals of the system.

The second section, “Societal Knowledge Management”, comprises 3 chapters that emphasize an overview of societal knowledge management, namely the conditions required to knowledge society flourish and be humanist, as well as the effect of bureaucracy in a national knowledge management project.

In chapter 3, Knowledge management and democracy: A critical review of some moral issues and social dilemmas, Krystyna Górniak-Kocikowska acknowledges the trade-off amid knowledge management economy and democracy in the ICT-driven global society. The assumption is that democracy is the prevailing structure of organizing the global society on a multiplicity of levels; and that it is regarded as desirable and morally superior in comparison with other political forms. This trade-off is “cyclical” (historical analysis) because it can benefit the humankind collectively and individually, or it merely benefits a select group of individuals. The outcome will depend on which ethical and social values would be accepted, however as Plato alleges the conception of good is the last assumption of knowledge.

Following up the previous chapter, Piotr Pawlak in chapter 4 approaches knowledge through a holistic viewpoint of the global dimension, which outlines the social studies approaches if we consider that Internet represents a specific global knowledge warehouse. This global warehouse enables global fluxes based on the cultural commodities as an extension of Western power, leading to an exchange of various cultural products. If this global flux detracts local culture, the recognition of an inclusive knowledge society is in danger or, if diasporic communities arise is essential to pose the following questions: how do equally ideas will be converted across cultures? Does the outcome depend on how components are demonstrated, or individuals’ comprehension? It is possible to achieve infusion cultures that are neither isolationist or imperialistic? What will be the response of intellectual property rights?

Another potential approach to societal knowledge management is the effect of bureaucracy when managing environmental resources at a national level, namely in Portugal. The intention of chapter 5 is to describe why “anti-commons” appear and why resources may be prone to under-use. Anti-commons generate too many exclusion rights leading to the under-use of resources. In Portugal, the knowledge flux absorbs a wide spectrum of institutions as regards to the approval of aquaculture projects. The inflated interaction of knowledge responsibilities undermines the approval of a project which engages an inefficient utilization of the resources. Therefore, Filipe, Ferreira & Coelho refer that bureaucracy act as a constraint to national knowledge management projects, raising ethical issues like equity as a consequence of the anti-commons tragedy.
The third section, “Organizational Knowledge Management”, covers 4 chapters and sheds some light over the ethical and social dilemmas that educational knowledge environments promulgate. Despite education being a transversal process and its key role in knowledge society, the editor has considered its focus and impacts at an organizational level as the following chapters will highlight.

In chapter 6, Masrom & Ismail debate the issues surrounding knowledge sharing, being this an action through which knowledge is exchanged among people, a community or organization. This sharing process is today based on technological systems, although is only one of the features that influences organizational knowledge sharing. So, knowledge sharing entails a key challenge in the field of knowledge management because some individuals tend to resist sharing their knowledge with others (it may be an individual, a group, a community, or an organization) due to multiple reasons. The objective of this chapter is to portray and debate three emerging ethics of knowledge-sharing, namely: hacker ethics, participatory culture ethics, and proselytization commons ethics. In fact, this triangulated analysis reflects the need to change the mindset of people in line with common ethical norms in believing that “knowledge sharing is power”.

On the other hand, Ugo Pagallo (chapter 7) demonstrates that knowledge sharing implies the need to debate the concept of copying in digital environments, meaning that novel ways for balancing property rights and “the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community” are required. Therefore, it is remarkable that common thinking is that digital copy is solely related to copyright issues, and not a responsible or altruistic behaviour through trust or incentives in order to guarantee a fair compensation to the author. This perpetual “pursuit” attempts to weaken the potential of innovation that digital copies generate and its potential to permit a truly knowledge society, which is clearly contradictory.

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 highlight the ethical and social issues that learning environments have enhanced. In chapter 8, António dos Reis illustrates the differences among the e-learning generations and the trade-off about ethical behaviours. For this author, e-learning 2.0 and 3.0 will require novel learning theories despite the positive contribution of connectivism to achieve ethical knowledge. Hence, ethicism will facilitate the quest for an ethical connective knowledge in e-learning 2.0 environments, and “connethionism” for e-learning 3.0 (linking connectivism, ethicism, connectionism). Silva, Alvarez & Rogerson in chapter 9 approach the global distributed knowledge systems in education and its ethical and social impacts in local contexts. So far, main stream literature points out equity and cultural sensitivity as leading issues, and ignores a systematic array of social dilemmas, as proven by these authors. For that, a theoretical and empirical argument within contextual determinants is exhibited in order to explore the arising dilemmas amid distributed knowledge, global and local diversity in higher education. Beyond these evidences, a wide range of empirical examples are depicted and analysed through Silva e-University strategic implementation framework which interacts e-learning with ethics and culture. As a final remark, the authors claim that to minimize the current and upcoming dilemmas novel educational systems must be: *localitas* (as a basic quality of bodies), *connectivitas* (blend status with reference to multi-glocal experiences), and *humanitas* (ability for self-consciousness).

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 are the components of the fourth section, “Organizational Innovation Dilemmas”, which purpose is to portray the dialogue involving organizational knowledge management and trends. From this overlapping reality a more transparent analysis and outcomes will be achieved.

To Lohikoski, chapter 10, it is essential to realize organizational intellectual capital, and for that sheds some light over its three components: human capital, structural capital and relational capital, as well as how are these inherently bounded to the technological system, organizational structure, and to workers personal mastery. Even so, the importance of human resources in knowledge management is
widely recognized in literature and the author promotes an academic and practical debate in order to identify the various dimensions connecting renewal, personal mastery, and employee wellbeing within a knowledge-based organisation (Finnish ICT-company). The conclusions of this contribution reveal that the transactional boundaries of interacting are obvious, generating change within communities that promote the integration of participants with unlike motivations.

Likewise, Takahashi in chapter 11 tries to acknowledge the challenge of protecting and interchange knowledge in organizations. Similarly to Lohikoski, this author claims that knowledge workers are an invaluable asset within organizational contexts; however, the problem relies on how to retain knowledge workers and their knowledge, and until what extent should be promoted access to the organizational body of knowledge. A not balanced trade-off may induce: the corrosion of working conditions, leading to a lack of attractiveness for future workers; lack of commitment and restraining knowledge sharing, so
internal knowledge creation will be affected. Finally, the non-compete and non-disclosure agreements have a short term outcome, and despite increasing its length of time seem a practical hypothesis it entails a “mirror effect”. The “mirror” effect acknowledges the lack of availability of knowledge workers at long term as a consequence of the previous procedure.

In chapter 12 is underlined the legitimacy of companies to increase profits but through moral knowledge. Furthermore, the chapter debates how it is possible to manage moral knowledge within organizational contexts having in consideration Blackler’s assumptions. To become ethically competent, companies have to combine individuals and organizational ethical skills. Instead of focusing on what is supposed to be done, the authors bear in mind moral knowledge transference within the multiple organizational interactions. In order to help managers cope with these challenges Kostrzewa, Laaksoharju & Kavathatzopoulos introduce the Ethical Index ETHIX (questionnaire to describe how ethical issues are handled in the organization) and the IT system ETHXPERT (supports and structures the process of ethical decision making). The reason for this contribution derives from an empirical observation: the dominant approach toward ethics is normative, which does not accurately reproduce societal status quo, because norms are shaped and revised as a result of global information sharing.

Trends, the fifth section, aim to introduce practical explanations with reference to the ethical and social dilemmas highlighted throughout the handbook, and for that entail chapters 13, 14 and 15.

In his first contribution, the editor questions the issue of fair compensation regarding knowledge workers. The recognition that human resources are a crucial asset in the knowledge economy is methodically documented in literature, as well as the underlying characteristics of knowledge workers and their responsibilities and duties. Furthermore, other leading focus is the human resources policies multiple features, as for instance: knowledge workers retention, personal mastery, intellectual property rights, etc. Despite this overall and continuous debate, literature seems to reveal lack of empirical studies with reference to the feeling of knowledge workers compensation fairness and what dimensions are valued as critical. So, in order to shed some light over this theme the editor resumes his PhD empirical results, as well as academic and professional experiences.

In chapter 14, Pullinger debates the current reality of UK government policy regarding knowledge management. Public knowledge management intends to create public value (outcomes, service quality and cost effectiveness) through trust. However, the author argues that the major constraint is to understand how it is possible that citizens shared knowledge become a source of value for public knowledge management, as well as the trade-off between personal data and shared knowledge. For that, Pullinger provides a comprehensive analysis of the ethical tensions in each stage of the SECI model in UK government. The empirical results allow us to conclude that cultural challenges need to develop consensus through social construction, which is enhanced by the relationship citizen-state in public knowledge management.

Last but not least, the editor presents the underlying assumptions of learning organizations namely its characteristics, dimensions, evolution, evaluation procedures, or ethical behaviour. In addition, Costa demonstrates that learning organization literature has been ignoring to the impacts of existing ethical and social dilemmas about knowledge creation, retention/use and sharing within organizational contexts (proven by the empirical outcomes of his PhD research project). So, in chapter 15 is acknowledged a conceptual framework that indicates the impacts of these dilemmas in organizational strategy and that certainly will produce feasible results when applied worldwide.
EXPECTATIONS

This handbook presents a comprehensive coverage of the theme, providing to a broad audience of researchers, scholars, practitioners and students with state of the art theoretical and practical developments and solutions on this domain. Some keen examples of potential Readers are people from management, human resources, organizational behaviour, information science, information technology, organizational sociology, computer ethics, and law, among others.

As a result, it is expectable several and interesting comments from the audience in order to promote an enhanced discussion with reference to the ethical and social dilemmas that knowledge management imposes. Moreover, the editor created an open forum about the handbook in order to promote a truly communitarian debate (http://www.goncalocosta.com/index/index.php?option=com_ccboard&view=forumlist&Itemid=66), as well as sincerely hopes that this stimulating and thought provocative work will allow future research and eloquence enough to change the guiding principles of the knowledge society.

Gonçalo Costa
Editor
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REFERENCES


