Glossary

**After Action Report (AAR):** A report written after a battle or project in which the unit commander or project leader or manager writes up a report of the action or project activity.

**After Action Review (AAR):** After the completion of a project, a team makes a point of formally reviewing the work done in the project, what actions were taken, and how a similar project might be done better in the future. It is important to feed this new knowledge back into the system so that other teams will learn from the findings.

**Agile:** Characterized by quickness and flexibility, it is a methodology used in software development based on iterative and incremental development.

**Avatar:** A graphic image meant to represent the individual (an employee or volunteer). It may be a portrait photo, an illustration such as a cartoon character, or a symbolic image such as a flower or car. In the case of an animated online space (such as in an online game), an avatar may be character the individual controls as his or her representative.

**Back Channel:** An alternative line of communication that runs parallel to other discussions or communication, typically in real time. For example, when team members are each at their own computers running a Webinar for the larger organization, they might want to open a chat box to allow them to work together in troubleshooting any problems that arise or feed each other answers so that things appear seamless to the broader audience. Audience members might use a back channel to discuss what is being presented by a speaker. Back channels have been used for more negative activities such as gossiping or making fun of a speaker on the stage.

**Beta Test:** Test of new software or a system newly implemented. Some organizations may prefer to call it a “proof of concept.” Feedback is gathered from those participating in the test, and changes are made before rolling out the implementation to a business unit or the full organization.

**Big Data:** A term describing the presence and availability of very large aggregations of data - for example, temperature measurements taken in thousands of locations every minute over many years, the credit card transactions of millions of customers over the lifetimes of those customers, or the accumulated commentary and images posted to social media sites. Not to be confused with “data warehouse” meaning an actual system holding specific data for an organization, “big data” refers to the fact that it is now possible to collect and access data in amounts never before imaginable.

**Blog:** A channel for content - typically a Website or group of intranet pages - with a specific focus. Individual blog posts are added chronologically with the most recent post on top. Over time, older blog posts move off the front page but are accessible through archives - by date, by topic or by tag. May also be used as a verb e.g. “I just blogged about my experience.”
Champion: A senior-level executive who advocates for KM related projects and investments and supports the knowledge sharing culture necessary to enable knowledge management success.

Cloud Software: Software hosted outside the organization’s internal networks on an external server, often - but not always - accessed via an Internet connection. Also known as cloud computing.

Collaborative Culture: A type of organizational culture characterized by a democratic, egalitarian approach and a co-operative, communicative attitude. Roles and responsibilities spontaneously evolve, performance is by personal coaching; reward and recognition is largely delivered via by intrinsic rewards.

Command-and-Control Culture: A type of culture characterized by an authoritarian and hierarchical world view and a competitive, macho, warlike attitude. Ownership is maintained on information; roles and responsibilities are codified; performance management is driven by SMART goals; and reward and recognition is carrot-and-stick-like.

Consultant: A professional engaged by a client for the duration of a defined project to provide guidance and advice in the context of a particular challenge or opportunity.

Consulting House: A firm specializing in bidding on and executing (typically large scale) assignments. The firm employs a significant number of (often technical or financial) experts who are offered in teams to the client.

Conversations: Dialogues between two or among more people.

Corporate Memory: The totality of what is remembered about the organization’s past - in records, documents, statistics, and other information objects as well as in the personal memories of employees.

Crowdsourcing: Having a large number of individuals help to create information, answer a question, or resolve a problem. For example, Wikipedia is an encyclopedia with volunteer contributors who have made a product to rival leading commercial encyclopaedia products. Software companies often use crowdsourcing to help with troubleshooting of their products. For example, Google has a Product Forum (http://productforum.google.com) allowing users to help each other with questions about the wide range of Google tools. Crowdsourcing mostly comes into play inside very large organizations.

Data-Information-Knowledge-Wisdom (DIKW) Pyramid: a way of thinking about information and knowledge management within organizations.

Data Warehouse: A term used to describe the aggregation of multiple data sets into a single (very large) compilation managed by IT professionals: “All customer transaction data is stored in our warehouse.” It is implied that the data is searchable and manipulable by software. Data warehouses are prominent in organizations where the volume of customer transactions is extremely large (e.g. banks, airlines, grocery chains).

Document Management: The process of capturing, routing, imaging, filing, storing, and archiving documents. A room full of paper files may be digitized so that each document can be found more easily; or documents may be captured as they are produced. A document management system typically involves a repository (the compi-
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Indexing of documents (e.g. terms appearing within the document or index terms subsequently added). Typical document management systems enable various levels of access rights so that each document is labeled as to what groups of employees may see it.

**Early Adopter:** Someone who is more inclined to adapt to change and pick up new tools or methods before most others. He or she values having inside knowledge, knowing “what is next,” and being ahead of others.

**Easy Win:** Also known as a “quick win,” an easy win is a tactical project that does not take a lot of resources to complete but has high value to the organization. Large strategic projects such as implementing a new intranet are typically not easy wins.

**Embedded Librarian:** A librarian who does not work inside a library but instead is located inside the business unit or community he or she serves. Such a placement allows for greater service to the group in question and promotes the librarian as an integral part of the team.

**Enterprise Search:** A search engine enabling users to find information objects on the basis of words held inside those objects (regardless of indexing or taxonomy). Typically, the search engine “crawls” through repositories or servers to discover the content of information objects held therein. The need to apply after-the-fact search capability to organizations’ ballooning volumes of internal content spawned a separate industry selling solutions based on the ability to do such “crawling.” Though enterprise search systems are often regarded as “silver bullet” solutions, they do not always live up to the expectation for reasons associated with the condition of an organization’s information objects (say, incomplete or ambiguous titles).

**Enterprise Social Network (ESN):** a means for employees to connect and communicate.

**Explicit Knowledge:** Knowledge found in tangible assets such as books, reports, slide-decks, databases, and documents (hard copy or digital).

**Focus Group:** A preselected group of individuals participate in a discussion led by a moderator or facilitator, with the conversation generally moving from general to more specific topics.

**Freelancer:** A professional who sells specified services to clients. Typical examples of services include Web site design and maintenance, graphic design of promotional materials, and managing publicity events. Generally, a freelancer provides unique skills on contract assignment while not necessarily offering strategic guidance or advice to the client.

**Hash Tag or Hashtag:** A tag used in microblogging and on Facebook to indicate the topic of a posting. The hash symbol (#) is used at the front of the tag to identify it as a tag to the system. For example, a posting about a knowledge management conference in New York in 2013 could have the hashtag “#KMConfNY2013.” Searching for a hash tag or - depending on the system - clicking on a hashtag can bring up a list of other posts or other content tagged with it. (See also Tagging and Tags.)

**Holistic Perspective:** Relates to analysis or consideration of a whole or complete system rather than the analysis or sum of discrete parts.

**Ideation:** The intake, development and implementation of new ideas. Ideas may come from inside the organization or from customers, clients, or the general public.
Implicit Knowledge: Knowledge based on someone’s experience and residing in his or her head.

Indexing (or Meta) Tagging: Attaching a term to an information object (a document, article, book, etc) so that the object can be found using that term. For example, a document describing an organization’s policies for parental leave - and not containing the terms maternity leave or paternity leave - could in addition be indexed (metatagged) with those terms by an indexer who knows users will think of such expressions; that way, a user typing them into a search engine will still find the parental leave document.

Information Audit: A process for identifying how information assets are acquired or produced within an organization and how workers store, share, and use them.

Information Science: The disciplines associated with manipulating and organizing representations of information through such means as symbols, filing and indexing/classification systems, and computers/software. The term includes a wide spectrum of subject areas ranging from archival preservation to conventions used in describing printed works to such concepts as user friendliness of system interfaces.

Insourcing: The purchasing of temporary assistance without making the provider an employee.

Intranet: A collection of Web pages used internally by an organization. They may simply be a collection of pages created in HTML, or they may be created and maintained using software called a content management system. Sophisticated intranets may be the entryway to all the organization’s information and software applications so that the employee or volunteer need only access the intranet to access all the electronic tools needed.

Knowledge Audit: An evaluation tool used to understand both the tacit and explicit knowledge assets within an organization and their role in advancing the organization’s goals.

Knowledge Broker: Someone who helps facilitate the knowledge sharing and knowledge translation processes.

Knowledge Map: An image or diagram illustrating how knowledge comes into and moves within an organization. It may identify knowledge assets, gatekeepers, and connection nodes.

Knowledge Sharing (KS) or Knowledge Transfer: The sharing of knowledge between individuals accomplished informally or through processes to enable the sharing of knowledge in a more formalized manner.

Knowledge Translation (KT): Moving knowledge obtained through research into a practical work setting. Specific knowledge translation methodologies have been developed in medical, healthcare and academic arenas to facilitate the transfer of what has been learned by researchers to practitioners or clinicians.

Learning Management System: Software used for tracking and reporting of professional development and training completed by individual employees inside an organization. The software may also be used to deliver the professional development and training content to employees.

Lessons Learned: Knowledge obtained after working through an activity, project, or problem.

Licenses: The legal arrangements whereby a publisher grants access rights to specified content (say, in a database) for employees in the customer organization.
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Livestreaming: A video feed of a live event, such as a seminar speaker, made available through an intranet or the Internet. Livestreamed events may be recorded, edited, and posted for later viewing.

Metadata: Descriptors, keywords, tags, or codes added to information objects in order to enhance findability and make searching flexible. For example, if in an image database, pictures of weddings, birthdays, and holiday dinners are all given the metadata “family celebration,” searchers may use that descriptor to find the largest set of images to review without having to think of all the possible terms for such images. The more specific terms are useful if in fact searchers are looking for wedding pictures and not for birthday party pictures.

Microblog: A channel for content in the form of a discussion stream in which individual posts are a mere 140 characters in length. Twitter is the best known microblog platform; others are used inside organizations.

Mind Mapping: Data visualization technique for organizing ideas.

Needs Analysis: A process to identify the information and services workers require in order to do their jobs.

Open Source Software: Free software created by a volunteer community. If the software has wide use, it may actually have fewer bugs than commercially created software. It may or may not be easy to find support (such as paid software consultants) to assist with installation, maintenance and trouble-shooting.

Outsourcing: Paying a contractor to perform a function or task that would otherwise be undertaken internally. (The definition meaning “sending manufacturing jobs to other countries” is not relevant here.)

Pareto Principle: A persistent statistical pattern in which roughly 20% of the entities in a population (be that a population of books in a book store, products in a catalog, or bank account holders) generate roughly 80% of the observed activity. It is named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto who in the early 1900s noticed the pattern and further documented it. Also known as the 80-20 rule, the pattern predicts that, for example, 20% of the items on grocery store shelves will generate 80% of the sales transactions; 20% of a city’s intersections will generate 80% of the intersection vehicle collisions; and so on.

Pecha Kucha (pronounced peh-chak-cha): A presentation format that limits the amount of slides and time to talk to 20 slides displayed for 20 seconds each for a total of 6 minutes 40 seconds.

Playing in Sandboxes: In this context, it refers to the ability to learn and increase understanding of technology tools and KM methodologies.

Podcast: An audio or video series (or show) that can be consumed via a computer or mobile device. Named after Apple’s iPods, podcasts can be viewed or listened to on devices other than an iPod. Many podcasts are syndicated and free via iTunes or other podcast aggregators. An individual audio or video file is not considered to be a podcast.

Post: An individual contribution, such as to a blog. May also be used as a verb, e.g. “I just posted my notes on the wiki.”

Project Management: A discipline used in organizations to plan, organize, communicate, motivate, and manage resources (e.g., people, time, and costs) to achieve specific goals or outcomes.

Real-Time Collaboration or Editing Tools: Online tools that permit multi-author simultaneous collaboration on documents. The best example is Google Drive, allowing for interactive chat and synchronous document collaboration.
Real-Time Communication Tools: Online communications tools permitting simultaneous interaction via voice, video, chat, and screen sharing. Examples include GoToMeeting, WebEx, AnyMeeting, and Google Hangouts.

Request for Expression of Interest (REI): Document in which an organization indicates a need for identifying consultants, providing a description of the project(s) being contemplated that is general in nature. The organization may choose to issue an RFP to a subset of those submitting an Expression of Interest document.

Request for Proposal (RFP): Official document in which an organization expresses the desire to receive proposals from consultants. Details are provided as to the nature of the engagement and as to required qualifications on the part of consultants.

Results-Achieved, Context-Centred (RACC) Model: model for thinking about information and knowledge management within organizations.

Return on Investment (ROI): In knowledge management, Return on Investment describes the gains or rewards to be had from investing in a process, in a system or tool, in employee training, in a new hire, and so on. The concept is sometimes expanded to include time (Return on Time Invested, ROTI).

Screencast: An instructional video showing how to use computer software or a Website. Typically the screen is shown in use, and instructions are added in text and/or audio.

Serendipity: Accidental discovery when there was no conscious intent to search. Examples include the phenomenon of stumbling upon information about topic B during a conversation about topic A or the phenomenon of stumbling on relevant and usable information while casually reading a newspaper or watching a newscast. In organizations, serendipity often occurs when an employee looks for specific information and in the process discovers other information (or individuals) relevant for other teams or projects.

Silo: A term used to denote the segregation of organizational departments so that they have few means of communicating. Stove piping is another term for the artificial presence of barriers between units: “Our company is so siloed that the billing people never talk to the sales people.” (Physical silos are tall, cylindrical towers typically used for agricultural storage.)

SMART Goals: Performance goals for individuals; SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Results-focused Time-bound).

Social Enterprise: An organization using social media tools to facilitate work and collaboration internally or in collaboration with their wider community such as customers, clients, volunteers, or the general public.

Social Media: A term describing the tools by which networks of people choose to associate across space and time (examples include Facebook and LinkedIn). The concept is described in the chapters on communities, social media, building smarter organizations, and conversations.

Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, Fairness (SCARF) Model: A model for understanding the motivation of people.

Straw Poll: An informal survey, usually conducted by word of mouth. In an online environment, a straw poll may be conducted in a number of ways: via email, microblog, blog, or with a quick polling application posted on an intranet or wiki page. The poll usually consists of no more than a few questions, frequently just one question.
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**Strong Tie:** Strong relationships between friends or colleagues. Strong ties are valuable in their quality (Wu, 2010b).

**Structured Interviews:** All participants respond to the same list of predefined questions.

**Tacit Knowledge:** Knowledge acquired through experience that is not easily codified for sharing.

**Tagging:** Addition of categories or keywords to pieces of information, files (such as images), or conversations in social media. They are typically added by the users themselves and may be selected from a pre-established list of tags or made up as needed.

**Tags:** The category descriptors or keywords added to pieces of information. They may be individual words or short phrases describing subjects, proper names, locations, or even steps in a process. They may be established in advance (as in a thesaurus) or created ad hoc by the users. See Hash Tag above.

**Taxonomy:** A set of words in hierarchy order showing their relationships. For example, **compensation** is a general term describing what employees receive in return for their work; **salary, bonus, and incentives** are terms describing specific types of compensation. A taxonomy sets out the terms an organization has decided to use about a concept instead of other possible terms. For example, if **parental leave** is the organization’s choice of term for the concept, it will be the heading under which documents “about our mat leave policy” are featured on the intranet for browsing.

**Teleconference:** A telephone call involving more than two people. It is typically used for meetings inside organizations or across organizations when participants of a meeting cannot all be together in the same place.

**Unconference:** A loosely facilitated, primarily participant-driven session that encourages discussion around a theme or purpose determined by those who attend.

**Unstructured Interviews:** Participants respond to questions that emerge from the discussion and that may vary from one participant to the next.

**Video Conference:** A teleconference (see above) with a video component. Depending on the functionality, just the call leader may be shown, just the current speaker at the time may be shown, or all participants may be shown. Participants may show slides or share their computer screens with others during a video conference.

**Weak Tie:** A weak relationship or acquaintance; most social relationships start as weak relationships. As trust is built, relationships are strengthened into “strong ties.” Weak ties are valuable in their volume, for example when looking for a new job (Wu, 2010b).

**Widget:** A small application created with a few lines of code added to a Webpage, intranet page, wiki page, or blog post. It typically pulls data from an external source and accomplishes one small task such as showing the weather in a specific city or showing recent headlines from a feed.

**Wiki:** Web pages that can be edited by anyone who has been given editing rights. HTML coding skills are not required. Some wikis can be edited by everyone who can view the site; others have more restricted editing rights. Wikis are known for being flexible; pages can be added as needed. Other features include the ability to see a detailed history of past changes to all pages and the ability to roll a page back to a previous version.