Preface

Knowledge management (KM) has been growing in importance and popularity as a research topic and business initiative since the mid-1990s. This is sufficient time for KM to grow into a discipline complete with its own journals. This book presents 20 chapters that discuss the theory and implementation of KM. The chapters come from articles published in Volume I of the *International Journal of Knowledge Management* (2005) and have been updated to reflect the current state of KM.

The purpose of this book is to document the state and key issues of KM in 2006. It is targeted to academics, practitioners, researchers, and students. Academics will get particular value from the foundational chapters in this book that discuss the philosophical foundations of knowledge and KM. Additionally, the first four chapters establish the foundation of KM as a discipline. This is done to lend legitimacy to research in KM and to help academics establish courses and degree programs that focus on KM. Practitioners will get special insight and value from the case studies and chapters on KM impacts on organizations and measurement of KM, as they are focused on successfully implementing KM in business organizations. Researchers and students will benefit from all chapters.

How is this book intended to be used? First it can be used as a reader in KM courses. It probably shouldn't be used as a sole textbook for a general KM course, but it would add value to any course focused on KM in organizations. Additionally, it is a good book for those wanting to keep current in KM or to begin a course of study or research in KM. Finally, it is good for business professionals just wanting to know how KM could help them run businesses and organizations more effectively.

The strength of *Knowledge Management in Modern Organizations* is in the diversity and strength of the chapter authors. The book has a global perspective as chapters come from Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. The authors also reflect a blending of experiences; several are longtime KM researchers, while a few are just beginning their careers. Combining perspective and experience levels means that I am able to give the readers a truly global view of KM, something that I think is needed and will be appreciated.

Knowledge Management in Modern Organizations is organized into five sections. Section I, "What is Knowledge Management?" presents four chapters that define KM and establish KM as an academic discipline.

Chapter I, *What is Knowledge Management?*, summarizes the various definitions of knowledge and knowledge management into working definitions that are consistent with those used throughout the book.

Chapter II, *Knowledge Management as a Discipline*, uses Kuhn's (1996) definition of a discipline to show that knowledge management is a young discipline.

Chapter III, *A Birds-Eye View of Knowledge Management: Creating a Disciplined Whole from Many Interdisciplinary Parts*, uses the experience of creating the encyclopedia of Knowledge Management to illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge management and to show that the knowledge management community comes from all over the world and from a variety of backgrounds.

Chapter IV, *Knowledge Management Research: Are We Seeing the Whole Picture?*, investigates the knowledge management literature in order to identify areas of research focus and accepted research methodologies.

Section II, "Organizational Impacts of Knowledge Management," presents five chapters that discuss how KM impacts performance, competitiveness, trust, and communities of practice in organizations.

Chapter V, *Linking Knowledge to Competitiveness: Knowledge Chain Evidence and Extensions*, uses the knowledge chain model and a survey of knowledge management executives to establish linkages between knowledge management activities and organizational performance.

Chapter VI, *A Multi-Level Performance Framework for Knowledge Management*, uses case studies to construct a model indicating how knowledge management affects organizational performance.

Chapter VII, *The Influence of Organizational Trust on the Use of KM Systems and on the Success of KM Initiatives*, uses an empirical study of 97 organizations to explore the impact of organizational trust on the knowledge representation strategies of codification and personalization.

Chapter VIII, *Knowledge Management's Impact on Organizational Performance*, uses a Delphi study and a questionnaire to determine success indicators for knowledge management in a variety of organizations.

Chapter IX, *Factors that Contribute to the Success of Knowledge Management Communities of Practice*, uses a case study to identify critical success factors for a community of practice.

Section III, "Measuring Knowledge Management," presents four chapters that discuss KM metrics, success factors, success models, and adoption.

Chapter X, *Evaluation of Knowledge Management: A Review and Agenda for Future Research*, summarizes the literature on knowledge management metrics and provides a direction for future research.

Chapter XI, *Knowledge Management Success Factors and Models*, summarizes the literature on knowledge management critical success factors and applies the resulting generic knowledge management critical success factors to the evaluation of proposed knowledge management success and/or effectiveness models.

Chapter XII, *Knowledge Management Success: Empirical Assessment of a Theoretical Model*, uses survey results to validate portions of the Jennex and Olfman knowledge management success model (this model is based on the DeLone and McLean [2003] information systems success model).

Chapter XIII, *Knowledge Management Information Technology User Acceptance: Assessing the Applicability of the Technology Acceptance Model*, uses a survey to investigate the applicability of the technology acceptance model (TAM) to knowledge management.

Section IV, "Knowledge in Organizations," presents four chapters that define and describe knowledge, how knowledge is discovered, and how knowledge is transferred.

Chapter XIV, *The Role of Context and Its Explication for Fostering Knowledge Transparency in Modern Organizations*, uses case studies to investigate the value of context to the reuse of knowledge.

Chapter XV, *Toward the Multidimensional Conceptualization of Knowledge*, summarizes the literature to show that current classifications of knowledge are limited and proposes a four-dimensional model of knowledge and a view of knowledge as existing in a continuum along these dimensions.

Chapter XVI, *Eliciting Tacit Knowledge Using the Critical Decision Interview Method*, summarizes a variety of knowledge elicitation techniques and then uses a case study to propose and discuss the use of interview techniques in the identification of tacit knowledge.

Chapter XVII, *Knowledge Acquisition and Transfer in Developing Countries: The Experience of the Egyptian Software Industry*, uses quantitative and qualitative research to investigate factors hindering the acquisition and transfer of knowledge in firms.

Section V, "Experience with Knowledge Management," presents three chapters that discuss actual implementation of KM in an airline, a manufacturing/export firm, and a research laboratory.

Chapter XVIII, *Adopting Knowledge-Centred Principles in Innovation Pursuits: The Case of Singapore Airlines*, shows how knowledge management was used to foster innovation and to improve the competitive position of Singapore Airlines.

Chapter XIX, *Knowledge Management Gap: Determined Initiatives, Unsuccessful Results*, investigates the failure of a knowledge management initiative in a Hong Kong firm and identifies four lessons learned that are related to management support and organizational culture.

Chapter XX, *The Lifecycle of a Knowledge Management System for Organizational Learning: A Case Study*, discusses the construction and use of a knowledge system used to enhance organizational learning by helping to pass on organizational culture to new members at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

I hope you enjoy *Knowledge Management in Modern Organizations*. It has been a labor of love and is something I'm proud of. I think we have prepared a book that many will find valuable and enlightening.

Murray E. Jennex
August 2006