A Support for Organizational Learning Needs

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge and competences capital of an organization are increasingly crucial. The organization survival depends mainly on its capacity to access new knowledge, to diffuse its competences quickly and to exploit and preserve its expertise fields efficiently and durably. Thus today, organizations are aware of the necessity to become learning organizations and to maximize organizational learning. Organizational learning process is composed by three sub-processes: a learning process, a knowledge management process and a social process. A web platform based on learning organization memory can answer to needs of all these sub-processes. This paper’s aim, within the approach MEMORAre, is to model and design an organizational learning support. To that end, in order to take into account all the identified needs, it proposes to associate: educational engineering (e-learning), knowledge engineering (knowledge management and semantic web) and social engineering (web 2.0 technologies). This support is a web platform using ontologies, semantic annotations and Web 2.0 technologies in order to organize, share, and capitalize organizational competences, knowledge and resources. This article specifies concepts of learning organization, organizational learning and it underlines the existence of the three different sub-processes in this learning form: learning, knowledge management and social. It presents all these sub-processes and their needs. Then it presents its approach in describing learning organizational memory modelling and how it takes into account learning, knowledge management and social sub-processes. Finally, it describes the platform E-MEMORAre2.0 as tool to support organizational learning.

Keywords: e-Learning, Learning Organizational Memory, Ontology, Organizational Learning, Sub-Processes

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, information and communication technologies (ICT), innovation, are the new criteria of the economic environment. They transformed our way of learning and working. In order to stay competitive, organizations of all industries and of all sizes have to capitalize competences. Nevertheless, these competences are often unconsciously used and in many cases related to tacit knowledge. That is why the organization’s knowledge and competences

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capital is increasingly crucial. The organization survival depends mainly on its capacity:

- To access new knowledge (technological survey, innovation, experience feedbacks, etc.);
- To diffuse its competences quickly (integration of new collaborators, harmonization of practices in company, etc.);
- To exploit and preserve its fields of expertise efficiently and durably (sharing good practices, knowledge management, capitalization, etc.)

However, a great number of lessons, experience feedbacks are often acquired then lost. Thus today, more than ever, organizations are aware of the necessity to become learning organization, i.e. organizations in which work is embedded in the organizational culture that allows and encourages the training at various levels (individual, group and organization) and the transfer of knowledge and competences between these levels (Senge 1990). In short, they have to maximize organizational learning.

Within the approach MEMORAe, we are interested in this learning form. Such an approach takes into account the organizational learning needs from the modelling to the designing of a dedicated support. This model is based on the concept of organizational memory which aims at organizing, sharing and capitalizing organization’s competences, knowledge and resources.

In the following, we specify concepts of learning organization and organizational learning then we underline that organizational learning process is composed of three sub-processes dedicated to: learning, knowledge management and social relation. Then we present our approach in describing learning organizational memory modelling and how we take into account learning, knowledge management and social sub-processes. Finally, we describe the platform E-MEMORAe2.0 as tool to facilitate organizational learning.

### 2. LEARNING ORGANIZATION

In the current economic environment, learning became the best means, for an organization, to be competitive in preserving knowledge and competences of each collaborator and each team. According to Senge (1990, p.3) learning organizations are:

*Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.*

To become a learning organisation, on the one hand, organizations must be able to capitalize and transfer the individual/collective knowledge and competences created in their core. On the other hand, they must enable their members to develop their individual knowledge and competences. This leads companies to reconsider their knowledge and competences sharing, to anticipate the lack of competences and their members’ training, while managing the changes induced by new practices. Nevertheless, all learning takes place inside individual human heads, an organization learns in only two ways (Simon 1991):

- By the learning of its members;
- By ingesting new members who have knowledge the organization previously did not have.

Thus, a learning organization must be ready to create, acquire and transfer knowledge, and to modify its control to reflect new knowledge and perspicacity of its members (Garvin 1994). According to Dodgson (1993), a learning organization is a company which builds structures and strategies in order to increase and to maximize the organizational learning.
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