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### KnowBits

- a. knowldgWORKS News moves to a monthly format

After some consideration I have decided to move from a weekly format to a monthly format. I still want to provide you with the best practical information about knowledge work in this corner of cyberspace, and the monthly format will not only allow me to discuss knowledge work, but actually do some knowledge work!!

- b. What's it worth?

There are several theories about estimating the value of intellectual capital. For the first time we might actually be able to see what individual knowledge artifacts are worth. A while ago I wrote about Inforocket. At that time Inforocket ([www.inforocket.com](http://www.inforocket.com)) was not up and running yet. They are scheduled to be up shortly, but as it turns out, another start-up beat them to market. The other start-up is exp.com ([www.exp.com](http://www.exp.com)).

I would like to suggest that these sites are living laboratories if they function as they are intended. What exactly is the answer to a question worth? How much is a person or group willing to pay? I will be monitoring these sites to see how they evolve, but they might very

well be the basis for a model of what knowledge is worth.  
Keep your eye on these "ebays of the mind."

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A Review and Synopsis of Managing Knowledge - A Practical  
Web-Based Approach by Wayne Applehans, Alden Globe, and  
Greg Laugero

In knowldgWORKS News Volume 1 Number 12 KnowBits pointed you to a series of World Wide Web links on the Microsoft Web Site. The links consisted of a series of case studies offered by Microsoft as examples of how their technology could be used as the basis of knowledge management efforts. Most of the case studies had very little to do with knowledge management, but quite a bit to do with Microsoft technology. One of the case studies distinguished itself. This was the case study describing the knowledge management effort at J.D. Edwards. The description of the effort was so rich that I sprang for the book by the people responsible for the work at J.D. Edwards.

My overall opinion: BUY THIS BOOK !!

Without equivocation this book is the best compact description of what knowledge management is about. The book consists of practical information and advice about conducting a knowledge management effort. It is short, to the point, and has lots of great diagrams. Here is a synopsis.

This book begins with a series of assumptions. They are as follows:

Assumption 1: (my favorite) "Knowledge management does not have to be profound."

Assumption 2: You have a champion and are figuring out how to get started.

Assumption 3: Document management concepts, technologies, and procedures provide the basic disciplines to kick off a successful effort.

Assumption 4: Yours is a mid to large size company with an intranet and extranet and an internet presence.

Assumption 5: Your business is consciously preparing for the internet economy.

The parameters of the discussion are clearly set forth by these assumptions. But consider that even if you don't meet all of the assumption criteria, the information contained in this book is still extremely valuable.

One of the challenges of any knowledge management effort is explaining why your organization might want to do knowledge management. Consider adopting these reasons :

1. Ease of partnering
2. Ease of managing expertise turnover
3. Ease of decentralizing decision-making

Each of these reasons represents a competitive imperative.

Any book about knowledge management needs to define the term. Remember my own definition goes, "Knowledge Management is the process of controlling, using, manipulating, and communicating that which enables us to do things." Consider the authors's definition of knowledge.

"Knowledge is the ability to turn information and data into effective action."

The authors go on to say this is a tactical definition "because they are not interested in esoteric debates about the nature of epistemology." (Hooray !!)

With regard to managing knowledge, Applehans et al give the following definition.

"managing knowledge means delivering the information and data people need to be effective in their jobs."

This book does not mince words. It tries to keep things fairly simple and straightforward. The authors represent the trichotomy of data, information and knowledge as a pyramid consisting of data at the base, information in the middle and knowledge at the top. Interpreting this figure, one can infer the relationship between data, information and knowledge fairly easily.

The book is divided into four parts and several chapters. Part one, "Getting Started", focuses on strategy and profiling people. Part 2 creates the basis for relating knowledge to the business and covers storyboarding the

knowledge and designing the organization around the knowledge it uses.

Part three deals with the topics, "Hiring People," "Modeling Content," and "Building the Technical Architecture."

Lastly part four presents a 90 day action plan.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is in part two where business process is attached to the informational needs and people involved in the process. What this breakdown gives you is the ability to see where the knowledge resides and how it is used in the business. The relationship of knowledge to process to people grounds a knowledge management effort in the business.

Given the success of the author's effort at J.D. Edwards, I certainly believe they are on the right track. Given J.D. Edwards, size one has to wonder if the process scales down to smaller organizations. I would argue that, regardless of the size, the processes apply. The technical architecture may be substantially different for a small organization but that does not change the desired results, and the process proposed by the authors should scale up and down for businesses of all sizes.

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