

# Output from discussion group on: Social networking tools and the "knowledge management fatigue syndrom"

# Social Networking Tools of Note

- What SN is -- “...a technology that leverages social circles to improve business and dating...” *SJMN*
- Recent
  - Friendster--dating
  - LinkedIn--Professional networking
  - Tribe--online classifieds
  - MSN Messenger, AOL’s ICQ Universe, Google’s Orkut
- Indicators of Their Importance
  - “...a tech battleground” --*SJ Mercury News*
  - “...this year’s trendiest new Internet fad...might yet grow to eBay proportions”--*Financial Times*
  - “When Microsoft executives debuted Longhorn--the next version of Windows--they stressed the importance of managing contacts as a key benefit of the operating system's improved WinFS file system.”--c|net

# Research/Development Background

- Research Initiatives of general relevance:
  - Africanist Social Anthropology--e.g., Mitchell, Bott
  - North Americanist Sociology--Wellman, Haythornthwaite
  - Early Computer Formalisms--Digraph mapping
  - Recent simulations--Smith and Stevens
  - CSCW
- 1st Generation Knowledge Management Systems
  - late 1990s inductive Knowledge Products--"Beehive" (Abuzz), "Tree" (Xerox)
  - "Document Sharing" Products--Lotus Notes, Domino, etc.
- Knowledge Management Fatigue Syndrome--The Proximate, perhaps Fundamental Impetus for the new Social Networking Interest?

# Social Networking and Knowledge Networking: Hakken's Propositions

- “Knowledging” is the fundamental current challenge to automated information technology: "Knowledge flows along existing pathways in organizations. If we want to understand how to improve the flow of knowledge, we need to understand those pathways." (Larry Prusak)
- A flawed knowledge construct was the fundamental weakness of 1st generation Knowledge Management “Systems”
  - Unitary vs. mutiplistic--”knowledges” vs. Knowledge
  - Content, “thing” vs. process--”knowledgings” vs. Knowledge
  - Knowledge separable from social context vs. knowledge networkings as social
- The Current Dominant Strategy: Develop Distinct Social Networking Tools to Complement Content Management Systems, but the Packet Switching Analogy Leads to the Same Problems
- The Necessary Strategic Alternative: Develop Tools to Support Knowledge Networking as an Integrated Process
  - E.g., facilitate meta-discoursing
  - E.g., Open Sourcing?

# What is the research/business issue or problem?

- How to reach the next order of business productivity?  
How do we move to the next order?
- Immediate need to extract knowledge. Why wait to retrieve the information needed?
- How do you define productivity and how do you measure the trade offs?
- What is knowledge?
- How do you leverage the knowledge contained within the organization?
- How do we improve relevance?

# What can we do to address the issue/problem?

- Intrinsic motivation.
- Different ways of approaching the problem based on the type of knowledge.

# What activities can we carry forward after the symposium?

- Continue to think about the problems surrounding social networks and knowledge management.