



As civilization becomes more complex and demanding, more and more of what we do will be considered knowledge work supported with highly specialized knowledge and expertise. Clearly, competitive pressures provide the impetus for companies to protect their mission-critical knowledge assets. Organizations can, without difficulty, typically capture explicit knowledge as patent inventions, trademark brands, copyrights, etc.; however, there is difficulty in identifying and capturing tacit knowledge generated and used by today's highly-skilled and mobile workers.

Conventional Knowledge Management (KM) approaches attempt to capture knowledge within formal structured systems, such as databases. However, systematically addressing "tacit knowing" that makes a difference in practice requires the participation of workers who are fully engaged in the process of creating, refining, communicating, and using knowledge in both structured and unstructured methods. Also, employees traditionally provide higher levels of acceptance and proactive use of KM if real value is easily understood (for them individually and as a team member) and participation is effortless and somewhat passive. For a business, this is being translated into a recrafting of employee KM-centric roles and responsibilities within the Web 2.0 type of environment.

A focus on these new unstructured knowledge-centric tools is driving the development of exciting KM solutions that speak to capturing and processing tacit and explicit knowledge throughout the enterprise, with customers, and partners. The adoption and use of these new solutions provide rich functionality for information (and knowledge) sharing, repository development, social bookmarking, community tagging, and community-build information bases. Current market intelligence reveals that best-in-class companies consider this new KM approach a critical success factor to attain or maintain competitive advantage in their respective markets..

There are four types of knowledge management models that are generally considered within the architectural design of new KM solutions, namely: **epistemological**, **ontological**, **commodity**, and **community**. An abstract of these models follows.

1. **Epistemological**: This view approaches knowledge from a scientific position and seeks to create systems of classification that embraces the logic of discipline, including "syntax" of science. A large amount of the discussion in this area is focused on analyzing the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar concepts such as **truth**, **belief**, and **justification**. It also deals with the means of knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims. Epistemology, above all, addresses the following questions: "What is knowledge?", "How is knowledge obtained?", and "What do people know?"
2. **Ontological**: This view provides a basic level of knowledge representation scheme, a formal definition of entities and their properties, interactions, behaviors and constraints. This view suggests that knowledge is focused with the nature of reality. Criteria of measurement and evaluation have to do with understanding the nature of the knowledge and the "reality." Ontology has one basic question: "What actually exists?"
3. **Commodity**: This view considers knowledge as an asset. As such, its value of knowledge depends on its purpose. Thus, instead of relying on the logic of science, one would look at the economics context.
4. **Community**: This view suggests that knowledge is a function of a community's human interactions. The keystone concept is the social construction of reality and the notion that knowledge is socially generated and enriched with human interactions.