



Overview

Taxonomies are emerging from the boondocks of biology, library science, and book indexing into a dynamic knowledge-centric world. In this environment taxonomies are viewed potentially as the 'silver bullet' that will help workers find the needle in the (intranet) haystack, reduce "friction" in electronic commerce, facilitate scientific exploration, and encourage rich collaboration throughout the enterprise.

However, before taxonomies become an acceptable tool, practitioners need to dispel the myths and uncertainty created in part by the multi-disciplinary nature of taxonomies and the hype surrounding enterprise content management (ECM) and knowledge management (KM) solutions. Current myths include:

- Taxonomies can only be provided as a hierarchical list of topics
- There is only one suitable taxonomy for an enterprise
- Organization's can shortcut the taxonomy development practice by adoption of a generic taxonomy
- Taxonomy applications (what the end user works with) must conform with the same rules as the underlying taxonomy structure (how the data is stored)
- Organizations create successful taxonomies by investing in the end of the information life cycle (post-publication) and ignoring the beginning (content creation)
- A taxonomy should be derived exclusively from the content in a corporate repository
- Separate taxonomies for workers and documents are appropriate
- Personal and departmental taxonomies do not need to be integrated with other corporate taxonomies

Organizations developing and implementing a taxonomy structure or framework should set in motion the process by understanding their corporate content demands, business process interactions (internal and external) and end user needs. The formulation of a taxonomy strategy will in general provide the opportunity to dispel the myths outlined above and formulate an appropriate taxonomy plan.

TKCI Approach

The TKCI Taxonomy Development Review approach includes the below activities:

- Define a domain(s) for taxonomy use throughout the enterprise
- Identify and assess corporate systems architecture with planned taxonomy use
- Conduct analysis of current content and user business requirements
 - Content sources and uses
 - Internal and external touch points within business processes
 - Key decisions points within business processes
- Formulate goals for taxonomy development and deployment
- Develop taxonomy design and system requirements
- Create vocabulary of terms, hierarchy of categories, and thesaurus
- Create navigation tools based on taxonomy structure
- Create forward action plan for taxonomy development (or sourcing) and implementation

The Bottom Line

The benefits of a successful developed and implemented taxonomy include:

- Time and effort savings
- Streamlined business processes
- Improved enterprise data and information integration
- Faster searches and navigation and increased productivity
- More highly leveraged knowledge and skills.