Augmenting Organizational Learning through an Intranet System: A Case Study at a Norwegian University

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Abstract – Over the last decade, universities have got new opportunities to increase their knowledge and learning outcomes by being a part of an open and dynamic knowledge-based environment. This is mainly due to the large adoption of computers, internet, intranet, and collaboration technologies on campus. In this study we focus on how faculty and administration at a University in Norway, utilize a new and dynamic intranet implementation to enhance knowledge creation and collaboration which could increase the learning outcome for the organization.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) such as best practice databases, intranets, collaboration technologies and recently social media are often implemented in organizations for the purpose of supporting organizational learning and knowledge management. Traditionally, corporate intranets implemented in organizations have been top-down organized and the information is filtered by management. The disadvantage is that the intranet presents only the formal understanding of the organization’s expertise and best practices. In addition, it lacks dynamism and opportunities to catch real time information based upon the employees’ knowledge and experiences related to daily work practice. Intranets that are built upon self-organizing principles where the users are active participants for creating and using information content are more likely to catalyse the flow of knowledge across the organization. This research seeks to investigate how an intranet of a more dynamic nature may become the organizational meeting point and an arena for digital interactions and collaboration at the University. Based on both qualitative and quantitative data, the paper delineates a general framework outlining the challenges, issues and opportunities in implementing and using an intranet as such in an academic context. We utilize organizational learning perspectives to analyze our findings.

The first part of the paper will outline relevant research background, arguing for why this research is important and present our research questions. The second part of the paper will introduce some theoretical frameworks on organizational learning, knowledge management and ICT. The third part will introduce the context of study and the adopted research methodology. Finally, section four analyses the set of collected data and defines a general framework encompassing the socio-technical factors that facilitate or impede the implementation and usage and learning outcome of such an intranet system.

Keywords – collaboration, Intranet, knowledge flow, organizational learning

Remark: The full paper may be found in www.elearningap.com or www.ijcim.th.org